Spiritan Faith Friends:

An Evaluation of Faith Development in a Peer-Ministry Programme

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Declaration

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

AG	Ad Gentes
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
AR	Action Research
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CELT	Centre for Enhanced Learning and Teaching
CT	Catechesi Tradendae
DCI	Data-Collection Instrument
DEA	Des Places Educational Association
EG	Evangelii Gaudium
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
FD	Faith Development
FDO	Faith Development Officer
FDT	Faith Development Theory
FGI	Focus Group Interview
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
IHRC	Irish Human Rights Commission
LI	Lasting Impact
LIC	Letters of Informed Consent
PLS	Plain Language Statements
PQ	Pre-Programme Questionnaire PQ
PPQ	Post-Programme Questionnaire PPQ
RM	Redemptoris Missio
5 R's	Responsibility, Respect, Reflection, Role Modeling and Reward
SGN	Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland
SFF	Spiritan Faith Friends
TRY	Teens Reaching Youth
TY	Transition Year
VS	Veritatis Splendor
Y3	Year 3
Y4	Year 4
Y5	Year 5

Abstract

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This thesis sought to evaluate how a Christian Peer-ministry programme entitled 'Spiritan Faith Friends' (SFF) impacted the faith development of male adolescents in three second-level Spiritan Schools in Ireland. What faith development meant in the context of this programme was explored, as well as how the faith development of the participants was impacted by a sense of connectedness that may have arisen from belonging to such a programme within a denominational school setting. The definition of 'connectedness' used is in agreement with that of Karcher and Lee (2002, p.93), who define it as 'a response to relatedness and belonging. …. Connectedness, then, reflects one's perception of his or her own involvement in and affection for others, activities and organisations.' There are two elements to draw from this definition: first, connectedness and belonging are distinct from each other yet related, and, second, connectedness which in this sense arises out of one's sense of belonging, has a reciprocal nature, received as well as given.

Many questions were asked, among them: How might this programme *impact* the faith development of the male adolescent participants? How might it *connect* with them during this stage of development? How might it connect with their *search for meaning within a religious identity?* Does it offer *a sense of belonging [to the Christian community]* by affording the experience of *a role* in the Catholic Church? Does the *denominational setting* impact the outcomes of the programme?

The research was conducted in two stages: an action research stage and a lasting impact stage. Both stages employed 'a wide range of interconnected interpretative methods,' as the researcher's ontology filtered the lens through which she guided and effected the final 'bricolage' (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, p.5).

Chapter 1:   Introduction and Rationale

1.0 Introduction

This thesis seeks to evaluate how a Christian Peer-ministry programme entitled 'Spiritan Faith Friends' (SFF) impacts on the faith development of male adolescents in three second-level Spiritan Schools in Ireland. What faith development means in the context of this programme will be explored, as well as how the faith development of the participants is impacted by a sense of connectedness that may arise from belonging to such a programme within a denominational school setting. The definition of 'connectedness' used is in agreement with that of Karcher and Lee (2002, p.93), who define it as 'a response to relatedness and belonging. …. Connectedness, then, reflects one's perception of his or her own involvement in and affection for others, activities and organisations.' There are two elements to draw from this definition: first, connectedness and belonging are distinct from each other yet related, and, second, connectedness which in this sense arises out of one's sense of belonging, has a reciprocal nature, received as well as given, a view shared by Whitlock (2006, 2007).

1.1 Rationale for the Research Design

The SFF programme was part of an informal Action Research (AR) process each year over a three-year cycle. The present study will formally engage with that process in its fourth and fifth cycle. By the fifth cycle, the SFF programme will have been critically analysed, evaluated and re-presented on five different occasions. Given that Transition Year (TY) students engage with a variety of new programmes and experiences during this particular school year, it was of additional interest to explore if the programme had any long-term impact on the participants' faith development and / or any possible sense of connectedness experienced by them. A Lasting Impact (LI) inquiry was added as a second strand to the research. It was hoped that the inclusion of an LI inquiry would add an additional layer to the overall faith development study. Further, it was of interest to enquire at what level [if present] the development lasted. This was of specific interest to me as author of the programme in terms of the creation of future religious faith development initiatives that are supportive of making a personal act of faith during a searching (Santrock 2001; Steinberg 2002) period of life and possibly into the adult stage as opposed to being simply another TY experience. It may be suggested that to depart from a third cycle of AR in order to pursue past-participants would provide data to support this second stage of the enquiry. Thus, in agreement with Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.31), this researcher aimed to employ 'a wide range of interconnected interpretative

methods,' as her ontology filtered the lens through which she guided and effected the final 'bricolage' (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, p.5).

1.1.1 Different Voices

This research sought to tell three independent stories as follows: The first story was of the researcher's learning as an 'insider-outsider' researcher and a facilitator for faith development in Spiritan schools. The second story concerned the male adolescents learning as participants in a faith development programme, in the research and as agents of change, and the third was the narrative of a theory that may serve to inform the learning from and planning of future Christian peer-ministry programmes with adolescents. The three stories or 'voices' (Coghlan and Brannick 2005) wove a pattern throughout the study that allowed it to take on its own independent design that in turn offered some insight, as derived from a Christian peer-ministry programme experienced by adolescent males in contemporary Ireland.

1.2 Background to Research

1.2.1. Drift from the Churches

There is much research presented on teenage faith and religiosity citing the ongoing drift away from organised faith by adolescent groups. Hoge's (1981) American research found that a typical 'dropout' from Church attendance arises between the ages of fifteen and twenty, the majority of whom are male. Kay and Francis (1996, p.32) cited a consistent drift from the Churches in the UK that begins in adolescence and invited the Church to 'introduce itself to teenagers where they are only barely aware of its existence.' Pertinent to this author's research is the work of Engebretson (2004, 2006, 2007) who sought to explore how Australian teenage boys (15-18yrs) in denominational schools experienced and expressed their spirituality. Her findings point to a vacuum that often exists for young boys. As she states: '[T]eenage boys need education for spirituality' in their lives (2007, p.26). In the Irish context, Youth 2K (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.56) articulates the need for adolescents to have a participative relationship with their faith community as 'participation developed a strong sense of affiliation and commitment.'

1.2.2 Share the Good News

Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland (SGN) (Irish Episcopal Conference 2010) states that catechesis 'seeks to provide for those who are believers and those who are searchers or doubters within the faith community. It presumes both an initial conversion and openness to an ongoing conversion' (2010 35).SGN (2010) respectfully acknowledges that like

their global counterparts, many Irish young people are 'becoming generally absent from Church life' (SGN 8). While the Bishops' accept and acknowledge this position they seek to engage in a meaningful conversation that emerges from a place of respect and love. In *Catechesi tradendae*, Saint John Paul II (Pope 1978-2005) describes catechesis as 'a very remarkable' moment in the whole process of evangelisation (CT 18). The creation of age-and-stage appropriate experiences that encourage dialogue between adolescent faith and youth culture is integral to the evangelising mission of the Church. However, we are reminded by Hryniuk (2005, p.154) that the 'influences of individualism, consumerism, and competitiveness in the dominant culture' present obstacles when inviting adolescents to engage in dialogue and discernment as they search for meaning 'in the bits and pieces' (Kavanagh 1977) of life. The 'remarkable' (CT 18) moment referred to by Saint John Paul II can very often be a missed opportunity if not sought out and engaged with in an authentic, realistic and relevant way. It may be suggested that there is perhaps a lack of adolescent faith development programmes as well as research on such programmes of evangelisation and catechesis that address the teenage drift from the Christian Churches. Further, there is a dearth of research on a participative role for young people in the Catholic faith community. It may be suggested, therefore, that there is little opportunity to engage in dialogue with the 'remarkable' (CT18) moment of catechesis.

1.3 The Spiritan Faith Friends Programme

The SFF programme that is being evaluated here, comprised of two stages: a series of leadership-training sessions followed by a series of peer-ministry sessions. The first set of sessions began in October 2009 and were completed by early February 2010. This initial stage brought the TY students together for training in servant leadership. I facilitated all sessions using an SFF booklet and digital presentations. Throughout the SFF leadership-training sessions, each participant was invited to come to a fuller awareness of his capacity for faith development, as well as his capacity for servant leadership, all from a position of faith. The servant leadership model that was explored was rooted in the work of Robert Greenleaf. In a more recent collection of essays on the topic Greenleaf (2002) contends that every great leader is a servant first. In addition, he argues that the authenticity of the person emerges out of his or her role as servant and not out of his or her role as leader. Thus Greenleaf (2002) suggests that to be a servant first reveals the essence of a real leader. As the participants were adolescents this theory had resonance with them as they could each associate with the role of servant before the role of leader.

The students commenced reflective journaling early in the sessions and this remained a constant call to reflection and meditation on servant leadership in faith and / or a developing spirituality. At the sessions, each participant was invited to choose six specific Gospel values with which he wished to align himself. In addition, further work was undertaken aimed at strengthening the core of his leadership. Each participant was encouraged to work on this value base allowing it to support and guide his servant leadership. The language used in the SFF programme was nuanced for the male adolescent participants. The leaders were called to stand 'shoulder to shoulder', to be 'leaders of honour', to 'be brave' and 'filled with courage' (Walsh 2012). Towards the end of the leadership-training sessions, the SFF peer-ministry booklet was introduced and the TY participants worked through the various peer-ministry sessions. At this point, the participants were afforded the opportunity to work through their own ability and prepare to lead with the use of the peer-ministry booklet as a guide only. The leadership-training sessions are outlined in **Figure 1** below:

Bright Sparks

- **Introduction:** Called by Name. The name is the icon of the person. Using one's name inspires connection, respect, etc.

- **Reflective Practice:** Why / How would I practice?

Fanning the Flame

- **Leadership:** Who do I follow? Who will follow me?
- **Mentoring:** Why will they follow me?
- **Jesus as Leader:** What kind of leadership? Role modeling / Servant leadership / setting a good example

Hearts Ablaze

- **Values and Vision:** Who am I called to become? Who do I wish to become? How do my current choices impact the adult I will become?
- **E Leadership:** What is E Leadership?
- **Emotional Intelligence** How can I engage my whole self?

Unforgettable Fire

- **Confirmation:** What does this sacrament mean to me? What does the Holy Spirit mean to me? Gift of the Holy Spirit
- **Starter Charter:** How do servant leaders lead? How will the 6th class pupils react?
- **Teaching and Learning:** How important is my / their teaching and learning?

Figure 1

Upon completion of the leadership-training sessions, the TY participants were invited to begin the 6th class peer-ministry sessions. This part of the programme took place in the feeder school where each 6th class pupil had the task of populating their SFF peer-ministry booklet. Having led and participated in a prayer at the beginning of each session, the TY participants were joined by their allocated five pupils and worked with a second TY and his five pupils. This afforded each TY participant the responsibility of a leadership role while not leaving him isolated during any of the sessions. This methodology also encouraged the TY participants to help and to support each other. At the end of each session, the TY participants affirmed their 6th pupils and allocated work to be

completed for the following session. The sacrament of Confirmation, attended by each TY participant to encourage his 6th class pupils, took place between the fourth and the fifth peer-ministry session. When the fifth and final session with the 6th class pupils took place, the TY participants celebrated with, and awarded certificates to the newly confirmed pupils. During the prayer at the opening of the final session, the TY leaders led the singing. Each year this element of the TY leadership-in-prayer became a highlight of the programme. (A list of the SFF programme contents is presented in Appendix 10z.)

1.4 Research Questions

This thesis will explore important research questions as follows:

1) How might a Christian peer-ministry programme rooted in the personal act of faith impact on the religious faith development of the adolescent participants?

2) How might the programme connect with adolescents on a religious faith development level during this stage of their development?

3) How might the programme connect with the adolescents' search for meaning within a religious identity?

4) Is the programme considered a faith experience at all?

5) Does the programme offer a sense of belonging to the Christian community by affording the participants the experience of a role in the Catholic Church?

6) Does the denominational setting impact the faith development of the adolescents in any way?

These questions guided the process of creating and shaping the data collection instruments employed in this thesis. They were explored at various times in the research that was conducted in two stages:

(i) An Action Research stage
(ii) A Lasting Impact stage

1.5 Limitations and Delimitations of this Research

This research dealt with males of a particular age who attended a Catholic Spiritan post-primary school. It did not seek to draw comparisons with any other age group or with girls of a similar age group or with others in a similar denominational school. It is worth noting however that Kay and Francis (1996, p.25) found that the commitment towards Christianity declines during the school-going years and this decline 'applies to both sexes'. Further, Kay and Francis (1996, p.26) add that

in relation to attitudes towards Christianity there was 'greater variability of attitude scores among boys: there will be some boys who hold very positive attitudes and others who hold very negative attitudes'.

Although the SFF programme is offered to all TY students, it operates with a small opt-in group from each school. It should be noted, therefore, that the small size and two-term duration of this programme may serve as limitations to the depth of insight and breadth of generalisations generated by it. In addition, this is a self-selecting sample which cannot be said to reflect the broader population in Irish schools. However, in my experience, there is much undocumented data surrounding this annual programme in the Spiritan Schools. This data which was wholly positive and of an experiential nature was situated 'in the moment' and was, therefore, neither recorded nor categorised. This may serve as a delimitation to the present research. The findings are of particular interest to the Spiritan Order and it is hoped that they may offer various insights for future Christian-faith development and peer-ministry programmes with adolescents in any post-primary school.

Chapter 2:   Literature Review

2.0 Evangelisation and Mission

Although the terms evangelisation and misson are not employed directly in the SFF programme, they implicitly describe its process. Evangelisation comes from the Greek translation and means to preach 'the Good News', the mission of the church (Barclay 1964). From the teachings of the church, the terms evangelisation and mission take on a multiplicity of meanings and describe many 'important and interrelated activities' (Collins 2010, p.87). Bevans (2009) holds that in terms of evangelisation and mission, to consult the texts of Vatican II, one must engage with all documents as opposed to searching within a themed text. He adds that even though *Ad Gentes* (*AG*) may not have been written with 'a pastoral and dialogical spirit with which all mission needs to be done' (2009, p.8), it is indeed the lens through which the Vatican document ought to be read and understood today. The decree opens up many fresh perspectives on mission and contributes to a wider understanding of evangelisation. Paragraph two of the document notes that the church is 'missionary by her very nature' (*AG*, 2). Bevans (2014) suggests that this teaching illuminates the essence of Christianity as a participation in the 'very life of the Trinity' (2014, p.2). This theology moves evangelisation and mission away from the rather narrow focus of ecclesiastical or territorial jurisdiction to the wider context of the market place. This shows clearly that evangelisation and mission are at the very heart of the Gospel and of Church teaching. They signal that one is 'caught up in the very life of God, which is a life of reaching out and a saving presence in the world' (Bevans 2014, p.2).

In 1975, ten years after the close of Vatican II, the apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN*) continued the work of the synod on the theme of evangelisation and mission. *EN* presents again and affirms the responsibility of each Christian to share the Good News of Christ. Dulles (2008) notes that Pope Paul VI taught evangelisation as the Church's primary service and directly emphasised the proclamation of the Gospel. In *EN* 27, Paul VI asserts that 'evangelization will also always contain - as the foundation, center, and at the same time, summit of its dynamism - a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy' (*EN*, 57). Based on this abstraction from *EN*, I assert that a faithdevelopment programme that is immersed in and emerges from the teaching of Jesus Christ, may be viewed as a programme that is engaged with and an integral part of the Church's work of evangelisation.

Saint John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptoris Missio (RM* 1990*)* reiterated the Second Vatican Council's call for interior renewal. Thus each Christian is invited again to be filled with the Holy Spirit and share the Good News, playing an active role in the missionary activity of the Church. We are reminded that '[f]aith is strengthened when it is given to others' (*RM, 2*). John Paul further develops the concept of evangelisation with his assertion that it neither restricts one's freedom, the religion of others or the multiplicity of cultures. At the same time, he insists on the need for Christians to breathe new life into their missionary activity which is led by the Holy Spirit. Duffy (2012) notes that the 'new evangelisation' called for by John Paul II 'involves a serious engagement with the various cultural and social factors that shape and condition human life today' (Duffy 2012). Each Christian is thus called to engage in an honest and open dialogue with others who have arrived at a searching phase in their lives.

Continuing the theme of evangelisation and mission of the church, Pope Francis's first Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*EG,* 2013), expresses the joy of sharing the Gospel with all. He begins his exhortation by encouraging Christians to 'embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation marked by this joy' (*EG*, 1). Pope Francis, by dedicating paragraph One hundred and five to young people, notes directly that education does not always produce what is required or needed. He acknowledges the 'rise and growth of associations and movements mostly made up of young people' (*EG*, 105) that is the work of the Holy Spirit, who values their searching for a 'more real sense of belonging' (*EG*, 105). Pope Francis recognises the 'need for the young to exercise greater leadership' and celebrates the concept of young people 'bringing Jesus to every street…' (*EG*, 105). Dulles (2008) and Collins (2010) agree that an increasing number of young people have heard the call from the fathers of the church, urging them to act on the joy of the Gospel and to develop their identity in and through their faith. The SFF programme at the centre of this thesis issues an proposal to those who wish to seek and to develop their faith by sharing it with others, that they will in so doing open themselves, by the grace of God, to strengthen it (*RM*, 2).

Exploring the difference between pastoral evangelisation (addressed to the faithful), ecumenical evangelisation (addressed to a divided Christianity) and missionary evangelisation (addressed to those who do not know God) SGN (2010) defines the different contexts for evangelisation and mission. Further, it suggests that when God's love for each of us is wholly embraced we are launched on a lifelong journey of seeking to hear the 'Good News' of Christ's life, 'ministry, passion, death and resurrection', (SGN 30) dialogue within our hearts. Thus one is eagerly

encouraged to come to the place of adolescent faith development with humility and a deep sense of respect for those who are searching for God (SGN 31). In this spirit of adolescent pastoral evangelisation the SFF programme works to engage young people in faith development and hopes, appropriately, to 'show its authenticity and unleash all its missionary force' (*VS 107*).

2.1 Faith Development

This brief consideration of evangelisation and mission leads to an exploration of an authentic understanding of religious faith development as employed by me in my capacity as Faith Development Officer (FDO) within Spiritan schools in Ireland. James Fowler's (1981) Faith Development Theory (FDT) forms the scaffolding for this exploration and it is imbued with the distinction between faith and belief and faith and doubt as outlined by Dermot A. Lane (2003) who presents a theological analysis of faith. Both authors cite Winfred Cantwell Smith (1916-2000) as one of the influences in their exploration of faith and stages of faith. The definition of faith development inherent in this programme recommends that the work of faith development, at any stage in a person's life, is only in response to that person's faith enquiry, made as a free act. Vatican II's 'Declaration on Religious Freedom' (1965) states that individuals have the right 'to religious freedom' and that no one can be 'forced to embrace the Christian faith against his or her own will' (*DH* 14). Authentic faith development happens in response to an individual becoming aware of the awakening of God's grace (Rahner 1978) born within him or her, as opposed to being an imposition from without. Faith formation and development can neither be imposed nor arise from a form of explicit or implicit coercion. Each recognises and respects that people are at distinct and different stages in their faith journey (Tuohy and Cairns 2000) and acknowledges respectfully the 'Age' one lives in and the 'age' one has arrived at (Harris and Moran 1996). Migliore (2004) emphasises these points when he states that 'believers do not live in a vacuum … they live in particular historical contexts that have their own distinctive problems and possibilities' (2004, p.4). SGN (2010) expresses faith development as 'a term that suggests energy, dynamism and lifelong commitment in helping people come to know and live more fully their Christian faith' (SGN 43). It is suggested that this definition exudes the vitality called for in adolescent faith formation and it is hoped echoes the experience of the SFF programme. It should be noted that a recent report from the Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) on the teaching of religion in schools (IHRC May 2011) suggesting that 'indoctrination' or 'proselytism' (May 2011, p.105) has taken place in Irish schools has been greeted with incredulity among religious educators who have been engaged in authentic religious faith development for decades in Ireland.

2.1.1 Faith and Doubt

Christian faith development embraces 'the human impulse to question and to seek for deeper understanding' (Migliore 2004, p.5). Faith and doubt co-exist within the paradigm of authentic faith development. No human being is born without faith; it is at the heart of each being and is a fundamental and universal human quality (Fowler 1981; Lane 2003). One may suggest that the modern rhetoric that suggests that there are people of faith and people of no faith, is unhelpful and confusing in any faith development debate. In the words of Fowler (1981) faith is 'a human universal, a feature of living, acting and self-understanding, of all human beings whether or not they would claim to be 'religious' in any traditional way' (1980 p.17). In agreement with the above, Lane (2003) argues that faith can no longer be categorised by religion leading to the segregation of believers and non-believers. Faith 'belongs intrinsically and universally to the human condition' (Lane 2003, p.75). Wright (1978) argues that both atheists and humanists can identify faith as that which does not necessarily have a 'formal religious component' (1978, p.702). How 'primordial faith' (Lane 2003, p.75) does or does not develop a formal religious component is the business of faith development and is crucial for Church leaders, catechists and religious educators who work to support their faith community through the generations. It may further be suggested that faith and doubt held together in a healthy dynamic tension serve to bring about an authentic faith built on 'faith seeking understanding'. Lane (2003) and Migliore (2004) emphasise that to continue to ask questions is the premise of authentic faith development. To have the courage and the creativity to live and to formulate new questions empowers the authenticity of faith because in 'faith formation there is always room for engagement with the questions, doubts and unbeliefs' (Lane 2003, p.45).

2.1.2 Faith and Belief

The distinction between faith and belief adds to the definition of faith development being explored in this thesis. Fowler (1981) and Lane (2003) draw on Smith (1979) when they discuss the distinction and dialogue between faith and belief. Fowler (1981) documents Smith's (1979) linguistic treatment of the Latin word 'credo' (1981, p.12) arriving at a deeply significant description of 'belief' as that which you 'set your heart upon' (1981, p.14). Lane (2003) adds that in contemporary theology, faith and belief have become identified with each other and their distinctiveness often 'muddled' (2003, p.79). Lane (2003) outlines the origin and distinctiveness of the understanding of the word 'faith' as both noun and verb, i.e. to have faith and to 'make the act of faith' (2003, p.79). For Christians, the understanding of belief goes far beyond a set of assembled statements on the code, creed or cult of Christianity to the free and individual act of entering into personal relationship with God, as revealed in Jesus Christ. Thus belief stands with faith in a

reciprocal relationship. Lane (2003) raises a salient question when he enquires if a crisis of faith, as often discussed in the twenty-first century, may be more a crisis of belief and may indeed be 'a protest by people against the inflation of belief at the expense of the more important factor of personal faith' (Lane 2003, p.82). The works of Paul Tillich (1886-1965), Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) and Smith (1979) as suggested by Fowler (1981) and Lane (2003) are wholly instructive here, as the research question being addressed in this study concerns how the participants, whose faith may or may not operate within a religious paradigm, develops in such a way as to support their participation in the personal journey of Christian faith.

It is thus suggested that faith development, if it occurs, in the context of the SFF programme is in response to an invitation by those who seek to embrace a fuller understanding and awareness of God's grace in their lives. Faith development is mapped in relation to Fowler's FDT (1981) and Lane's (2003, 2013) expression of religious faith as the personal act made manifest in the lived communal experience of each person. It is where faith and belief co-exist as separate yet distinct. It may be suggested that the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) supports the understanding of faith development employed in the SFF programme when it asserts the following:

> Faith is a personal act - the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. ... Our love for Jesus and for our neighbour impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith (CCC 166).

2.2 Faith Development Theory

In order to come to a fuller awareness of the faith landscape and developmental context of adolescence, a brief review of Fowler's (1981) Faith development Theory (FDT) is necessary. Fowler's (1981, p.5) FDT began decades of research in the progression and growth of faith towards a final stage that he identifies as a 'Universalizing Faith'. His theory of faith development is one of the most significant models of religious development to emerge in the literature (Parker 2006). It has influenced many significant developments in religious education, pastoral care, health care and developmental psychology (Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Santrock 2001; Streib 2005; Collins 2010; Neuman 2011). Fowler's (1981) FDT was created from research grounded in the pioneering work of Jean Piaget (1896-1980) Erik Erikson (1902-1994) and Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987), in

conjunction with the theological discussions of faith by Tillich (1957), Niebuhr (1960) and Smith (1979).

2.2.1 An Understanding of Faith

Fowler's (1981) FBT describes faith as synonymous with the faith definition provided by Tillich (1957) and Niebuhr (1960). According to Fowler (1981, pp.iii-5), faith is not a specific religion or a set of beliefs, it is 'interactive and social', embedded in the 'shared visions and values that hold human groups together' and is for all people a 'human universal concern.' Thus it may be suggested that for Fowler (1981) the faith that one's 'heart is set upon' (1981, p.5) is also the business of the community. In contemporary culture, faith is sometimes described as being of a 'private nature'. In contrast, the present research suggests that it is necessary to find ways of establishing that Christian faith by its very essence is indeed a personal act but cannot be a private affair.

> A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must
> love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love
> one another (John 13:34-35).

In order to follow in the footsteps of the 'Jesus of history' and the 'Christ of faith', (Martin Kahler 1892) it is necessary to recognise that Jesus, at the outset of his public ministry, called together a community of disciples (Matthew 4:18-22) and so began his mission in community. Harris and Moran (1998, p.109) make an important contribution when they suggest that 'to be is to be with' and that a Christian's being in the world, made in the image and likeness of God, thrusts that person into community with self, others and God. The SFF programme is rooted in that faith dimension that engages with one's belief in self, others and God. This engagement is a foundational tenet of the Spiritan religious educational ethos and of the programme itself. Faith is much more powerful than belief presented as a set of doctrines or a creed (Fowler 1981). It is understood as the core value system that is embraced by the heart and illuminates the process of growth graced by God in every human (Lane 2003). Fowler (1981, p.24) gives form and content 'to our imagining of an ultimate environment' which for Christians is nothing other than the 'Kingdom of God' (Luke 17:21).

2.2.3 Fowler's Stages of Faith: A Brief Précis

Fowler's (1981) Stages of Faith envisages six stages of faith but begins first with a 'pre-stage' entitled 'Undifferentiated Faith' (Fowler 1981, p.119).

The 'pre-stage' - Primal or Undifferentiated Faith is where an infant develops basic trust, mutuality, hope and courage in his or her carer in an effort to establish selfhood and identity. The strength of interactions in this phase provides the foundations for all faith development that will develop in the future.

Stage One: Intuitive-Projective Faith begins when a child reaches the age of two and lasts until the age of seven. The imagination is central to this stage and empowers the child to engage in fantasy-filled fluency. Fowler (1981) notes that this is 'the stage of first self-awareness' (1981, p.133). Intuitive-Projective Faith is typical of this stage as the child is egocentric. Reality is not clearly differentiated from fantasy therefore difficult and often more adult-orientated aspects of religion can impact this stage of faith development in a way that impedes flourishing and growth. When a child reaches the capacity for concrete operational thinking, he or she can begin to move toward the second stage.

Stage Two: Mythic-Literal Faith occurs during the tenth year of a child's life. In this stage, belonging to a community of faith is significant as the code, creed and cult of the faith community begin to shape the understanding of a child in a literal way. The heights of imagination previously yielded are now limited as this stage heralds the onset of concrete operational thought. The strength of this stage lies within the child's ability to develop story, drama and myth as a structuring experience. With the emergence of formal operational thought and the awareness of apparent contradictions in an adolescent's search for meaning, Stage 3, the Synthetic-Conventional stage of faith is arrived at.

Stage Three: Synthetic–Conventional Faith

The 'Synthetic–Conventional Stage' in Fowler's (1981, p.172) FDT to be viewed in conjunction with this study 'typically has its rise and ascendency in adolescence'. Adolescence is a time in life where a person's independence is growing and peer as well as adult relationships take on a new significance. Relationships with other teens become a primary concern and opinions of peers become more significant and more important than any other (Fowler 1981; Mizelle and Mullins 1997; Santrock 2001; Steinberg 2002). In agreement with the findings of Steinberg (2002), this research argues that interpersonal encouragement can emerge from imitation as well as from social reinforcement and both progressions happen in a peer group. For adolescents, the peer group and one's interaction within it are essential in coming to an awareness of oneself. Of particular

importance in this regard and more particularly to this research, is the notion that in school, adolescents are predominantly concerned with their interpersonal relationships and describe 'their identity issues mainly in terms of their personal capacity for relationships' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.198). This aptly-named stage is that of a conventional faith where the adolescent takes on the faith system of the local parish or community and is 'in common' with others, as opposed to being different. He or she will take it on but it is only tacitly held (if at all) with little ownership or critical reflection. It is synthetic in that it is 'non-analytical' (Fowler 1981, p.167) but gives a sense of belonging with others. To echo the above research, Fowler (1981) holds that during this stage of faith one's self-identity and faith are closely linked with significant others and so if the most important voices in the adolescent conversation are those of peers, 'God', if believed in, is imbued with the interpersonal qualities of a best friend. Evidence of this theory is shown in the findings of Engebretson (2006) and her work with Australian teenage boys. In her research, not all boys responded to particular survey questions about spirituality and when they did, their sense of God was transmitted through life experiences and was that of 'a personal God, ('like an old friend'), who was always there, who listened, who understood, who cared and protected. 'God's got your back', summed up the experience of the boys who responded' (Engebretson 2006, p.335).

Stage Four: Individuative-Reflective Faith occurs when the late adolescent seeks to pursue an identity that is implicitly as well as explicitly in dialogue with faith. The juxtaposition of individuality and community can cause tension as well as development. At this stage, the late adolescent's faith thirsts for understanding and so leans towards 'a more dialectical and multileveled approach to life truth' (Fowler 1981, p.183).

Stage Five: Conjunctive Faith involves looking to one's past experience with renewed vision. The person is called to reshape and redefine faith that is beyond one's rational control as he / she can appreciate and identify symbols beyond their literal meaning and is often committed to justice for all. People who reach this stage begin to appreciate the weight of truth in the previous two stages of faith. They have come to understand and appreciate that life is full of mystery. In this stage emphasis is placed on communal as opposed to individual activity. This leads in to the final stage in Fowler's (1981) Stages of Faith.

Stage Six: Universialising Faith According to Fowler (1981), this stage is 'owned' by a few, namely, Gandhi (1869-1997), Mother Teresa (1910-1997) and Martin Luther King, Jr (1929-1968). It exudes the embodiment of selfless love through the pursuit of justice and altruism. At this stage

of faith, life is cherished as those who achieve this stage of faith development believe in action and devote their lives to challenging the status quo.

2.2.4 Adolescents and the Church

In stage three of Fowler's (1981) stages of faith, religious understanding and beliefs become more autonomous and abstract and tend to yield to a more refined sense of spirituality than the previous stages. As suggested above, adolescents may reject the organised structure of a specific religion and yearn for a more private faith. This observation is reinforced by research that shows the absence of adolescents from the mainstream Christian Churches which is a cause of concern for all who work in the area of ministry and faith development (Kay and Francis 1996; Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Engebretson 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007; Creasy Dean 2010). Among their findings, Kay and Francis (1996, p.32) noted that as students grew up they became less likely to be associated with Church-related groups, adding that 'only pupils who retain membership of Church-related groups will escape many of the effects of secular group membership.' Tuohy and Cairns (2000, p.50) found that for many Irish adolescents there was a feeling of oppression from the Church, many had 'a sense of imposition of the institutional model of the Church, with it laws and rituals.' Engebretson (2004, p.187) claims that for Australian youth 'only 6.6 per cent of Catholics attending Mass were aged between fifteen and twenty-nine, making this the age group in the Catholic population with the lowest attendance rate'. It is interesting to refer again to Harris and Moran (1998) who suggest that spirituality is affected by one's place in the life span.

> Another component of contemporary spirituality is age. … [This] refers to the different ages of life: childhood, adolescence, young, middle and older adulthood, elderhood. … I have discovered that different developmental circumstances … contribute to different emphases in spirituality throughout the life cycle. (Harris and Moran 1998, p.110)

The adolescent male participants who opt-in to in the SFF programme are approximately sixteen years old and are beginning a life stage that demands much of them in terms of career choice and the Leaving Certificate State examinations. Their decision to opt-in is made as a personal response to an invitation issued by myself as FDO and the school. However, it must be factored in that their life stage may demand and engage more time and focus than they can allow for a religious faith development process to impact on any level.

The most recent study cited by Creasy Dean (2010, p.11), states that the American Churches' lack of ability 'to meaningfully share the core content of Christian faith with young people, points to a Church that no longer addresses the issues of being human, and whose God is therefore unimportant.' These are strong words but nonetheless have echoes on a global scale. Engebretson (2004) refers to the lack of ability that the teenagers in her study had to articulate their faith and Christianity. The findings of research by Kay and Francis (1996), Tuohy and Cairns (2000) and Engebretson (2004, 2006, 2007) offer much information by way of explaining what sits behind the drift of adolescents from the Churches. They suggest that the adolescents feel oppressed, have no sense of a participative relationship, are apathetic or feel alienated from the meaning and symbolism of liturgy. In agreement with Harris and Moran (1998), these young people are also in a life stage that impacts on their ability to engage fully (or at all) with the transcendent.

2.3 Value-based Commitments

During stage three of Fowler's (1981) stages of faith development, the young person's worldview is animated and affirmed; only in time will it become that which is the source of critical engagement (Fowler and Dell 2005; Parker 2006). Adolescence brings with it a new ability to form value-based commitments in relationships and ideologies (Parker 2006; 2011). However, the value-based commitments that are held, although defended and emotionally invested in, can again only be tacitly held (Fowler 1981). It is when the adolescent begins to engage critically and to reflect on his or her meanings and values that he or she will begin the transition to the next stage of Fowler's (1981) FDT. For the adolescent in stage three, religion (or spirituality or faith) is often recognised as important, valued and worth investment of time, but not deeply understood or defined. This part of the FDT is reflected in Engebretson's (2007) research which found that teenage boys lacked the ability to articulate a spirituality and an understanding and / or knowledge of the transcendent God. As noted earlier, God was more of a trusted friend (Engebretson 2006), than part of the blessed Trinity. This author's research suggests that a leadership-training and faith development programme may support an articulation of a 'rooted' spirituality (Harris and Moran 1998, p.109) and the beginnings of a sense of connectedness to a faith community that may already (because the participants opt-in) be emerging in the often counter-cultural adolescent landscape.

2.3.1 'Religious Adolescents'

One may ask this question: Are adolescents religious by nature? In what seems like a conflicting viewpoint to previous paragraphs, Steinberg (2002, p.313) holds there is still a proportion of adolescents who report that religion is 'very important' to them. This point is clarified by Steinberg

(2002) who adds that adolescence is a time of re-examining and re-evaluating beliefs and values that have been part of one's story to date. Hence it may be possible to suggest that to engage with a faith development process that is on offer is often more beneficial that working against it. Evidence, as stated above, found that many adolescents still decide that religion is ultimately very important to them. Further, in a recent paper from the Journal of Adolescent Research, Layton, Dollahite and Hardy (2011, p.381) contend that 'the majority of the world's youth are religious.' The authors go on to explore how religiosity has been tied to positive behaviour, lower negativity and that religious commitments have been found to be pivotal to the moral development, identity formation and the domestic relationships of adolescents. However, it is important to note that in the same research, although the most common 'anchor of religious commitment' (Layton, Dollahite and Hardy 2011, p.391) was religious traditions, rituals and laws, it was found that the youth sample experienced these traditions, rituals and laws in a distinctly different way to the common understanding. For example, it was not necessarily the religious meaning behind the celebrations that had significance but rather the relational aspects of the experience and the celebratory family event experienced by the adolescent (Layton, Dollahite and Hardy 2011). Furthermore, this research found that as the adolescent grew older, the religious traditions, rituals and laws held less significance as there was 'not the same closeness' (2011, p.392) or sense of the event being a huge focus point in one's life. It may, therefore, be suggested that the concept of 'religion' that is noted as important to adolescents (Steinberg 2002) and the religious nature of young people's family story as discussed by Layton, Dollahite and Hardy (2011) may be more about an emerging spirituality as opposed to an owned affiliation to an institutional Church. It may be added as a cautionary note that the adolescents in the above research may also be seeking out any sense of belonging be it of a religious nature or otherwise, and the sense of connectedness that may arise from it as these adolescents weave a trail through identity crises and work towards identity commitments (Marcia 1980).

2.3.2 Youth 2K

Tuohy and Cairns (2000) incorporated Fowler's (1981) work into their theoretical framework. This study found that many adolescents felt a perception of oppression from the Church, and had 'a sense of imposition of the institutional model of the Church, with it laws and rituals' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.50). The researchers interviewed a purposive sample of young people who 'were expected to be in Fowler's (1981) third stage of faith – synthetic-conventional' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.7). The study found that for the interviewees the search for meaning and identity within a particular faith 'focused mainly on participation and belonging, and also on the search for some

kind of authentic living' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.59). The findings call for the development of real and relevant relationships in terms of faith association and formation for young people.

Youth 2K (Tuohy and Cairns 2000) also suggests three formal catechetical levels of intervention that can be applied to the different stages of faith development in the lives of young people: a pre-evangelical level, an explicitly evangelical level, and a personal level whereby support is offered to those who have made a personal faith commitment (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.ix). I tentatively suggest that the focus of the faith development and leadership-training programme being evaluated is in the second and third levels of support. In previous years, many of the adolescent males who registered for the SFF programme were those who had made or were leaning towards making a personal faith commitment. It is worth adding, however, that the invitation to join the programme is open to all TY students. There have always been a small number of students who have (a) not made a specific religious faith commitment, (b) are of a non-religious faith perspective and / or (c) are questioning religious faith, who register and become participants of the programme. It has been the author's experience that this group equally challenges and channels the programme with an different worldview and therefore adds 'a critical friend' dimension to the entire process (Walsh 2013).

2.4 Benchmarking System

Although Fowler's FDT has been contested by various academics (Streib 2001, 2005; Clore and Fitzgerald 2002; Fowler and Dell 2006), it still stands as a benchmarking system for developing faith-formation, age-appropriate programmes. Beginning with Noam's (1990, p.378) proposal that cognitive-based theorists had overlooked 'the central structuring activities of the self by defining the epistemic self as the sole representative of structure', Streib (2005) develops this argument and holds that in Fowler's (1981) FDT, not only is there too much emphasis on cognitive development but there is also a 'disregard for dimensions that are just as crucial for the constitution and development of religion.' However, Streib (2005, p.114) asserts that his proposed 'modification' of Fowler's (1981) FDT is explicitly concerned with the advancement of the qualitative element in the research design and thus is grounded in the original FDT. Clore and Fitzgerald (2002) condensed Fowler's (1981) five stages of faith into four 'ways' of faith that operated in a more interactive fashion than Fowler's stages. However, Parker (2006, p.345) notes that even though Clore's (2002) findings show his measuring of different aspects of faith development, they 'also indicate that his instrument is not measuring Fowler's faith stages' (Parker 2006, p.345). These criticisms notwithstanding, Fowler's (1981) FDT is solidly anchored in the work of Piaget, Kohlberg and

Erikson, thus providing a consistent theory of faith development in tune with the cognitive, moral and psychological development of the person (Keating 1982).

2.5 Age-and-Stage Appropriate Faith Development

Lane (2003) makes a salient point that is pertinent to the present study. He asserts that the specific 'location and labelling' (2003, p.97) of Fowler's (1981) stages of faith ought not be the complete focus of attention. Rather it is the fact that Fowler (1981) found different stages of faith emerge at different periods in ones life. Lane (2003) argues that it is vital for Christian faith development to design age-and stage-appropriate faith development content to concur with each level of faith.

Following Lane (2003), this study suggests that it may be possible to suggest co-existing moments of faith that are specific to the Catholic faith development process. Beginning with the aforementioned primordial faith (Lane 2003) that is inherent to being human, one emerges from this 'moment' with an awareness or recognition of the transcendent other that becomes a reality in one's experience. The emergence of this awareness of the sacred Other through the grace of God heralds a shift from human faith to religious faith. This can only happen as a free act of each individual. Thus religious faith, according to Lane (2003) 'is a decision to enter into a personal relationship with God. This relationship is one of love, trust, and confidence addressed to God as personal' (2003, p.83). One may further suggest a second 'moment' where religious faith becomes rooted in monotheistic faith and the awareness of the sacred Other named as 'God' thus moving towards a third 'moment'. 'Faith in this third 'moment' is the experience of living before, in, and around the presence of God', (Lane 2003, p.85). A fourth 'moment' of faith may arise when the monotheistic faith looks specifically to the person of Jesus as the revelation of God. Thus the monotheistic 'moment' of faith develops as Christian faith. When this revelation is embodied in and transmitted through, what Lane (2003) calls the orhodoxy, orthopoïesis and orthopraxis, the code, creed and cult of faith, one arrives at the personal act of faith. Lane (2003) explains orthodoxy as that which 'embraces the doctrinal content of the act of faith', and holds that orthopoiesis embodies the morality of the act of faith (Lane 2003, p.85). Lane (2003) notes orthopraxis as the 'critical correlation of theory and practice whereby each influences and transforms the other', (Lane 2003, p.86). Further, Lane contends that all of these elements are central and critical to Christian faith. Moreover, when each element is embraced, the final 'moment' of faith becomes rooted in a Catholic context.

Catholic faith is personal and communal in that the gift of God's grace alive in one's life is lived out in accordance with the doctrine of the Church and in union with the members of the Catholic faith community, who are there to support and sustain one another as fellow pilgrims. These 'moments' of faith are suggested as carrying primordial faith as it flourishes into Catholic faith, which is at the root of all faith development in the SFF programme.

2.6 Progress Purpose Product

The brief exposition of Fowler's (1981) FDT, provides an introduction to the stages of faith arrived at by many adolescents. In addition, a co-existing set of faith 'moments' echoing the work of Lane, (2003) has been offered, these describe the emergence of Catholic faith development. We can now proceed to explore further the cohort of students involved in the programme.

2.6.1 Adolescence

Adolescence begins at thirteen and ends in early adulthood. The SFF programme works with a very specific age group in adolescence i.e. sixteen year olds. The proposed additional research planned with past-participants will be with adolescents who are seventeen and eighteen years. For the programme, sixteen year old students are considered the optimum age to engage with for two reasons. Firstly, the students are considered mature enough to opt independently for a programme that is faith-based and, secondly, they are not seen to be experiencing a particular learning challenge, as noted from research on the Irish education system. The ESRI (Economic and Social Research Institute 2004; 2006; 2007), in consultation with post-primary schools in Ireland states that each of the first three years of second level is associated with learning challenges known as 'progress, purpose and product' (ESRI, 2004; 2006; 2007).

2.6.2 Progress

In first year, the learning challenge is one of progress (ESRI 2004). Research findings indicate that progress can often be poor in literacy or numeracy in the first year as students are learning to deal with their new environment and connect with many new concepts, places and people. First year students require time and support as they make the transition from primary to post-primary education. They experience what Santrock (2001, p.227) calls the 'top-dog phenomenon'. They have moved from being the biggest, oldest and most advanced students in an environment in which they have most likely spent eight years, to being the smallest, youngest and least advanced students in a larger, newer and more impersonal environment. It may be suggested, therefore, that first year students are not in a position to take on a strong leadership role or to make an obvious and public

statement about their faith. It is interesting to note that Tuohy and Cairns (2000, p.52) found that many students of this age group who were actively participating in the celebration of the weekly Eucharist as altar servers tended to leave this practice as they made the transition into secondary school. For many, this was because no other role or involvement was presented to them and so the practice of parish liturgy was abandoned altogether (Tuohy and Cairns 2000).

2.6.3 Purpose

In second year, students tend to experience a loss of interest in school and this presents itself as the main learning challenge (ESRI 2006). Many students begin to feel disengaged from their school experience as the upheaval of the transition from one school to another is now complete and the focus of a state exam, although on the horizon, is not imminent. Research indicates that many students - especially males (ESRI 2006) tend to wonder what the purpose of their school experience is all about, with some students eventually becoming completely disengaged and disenfranchised (ESRI 2006). This finding is endorsed by Frydenberg *et al* (2009, p.266) whose Australian research identified the early years of post-primary school as a time when adolescents 'face a higher incidence of disengagement, alienation, disruptive behaviour, disenchantment and boredom'. Further, SGN (2010 106) agrees that this age group is not yet in a position to show appropriate commitment and maturity of faith in the parish or in the school.

2.6.4 Product

In third year, students sit their first State examination, the Junior Certificate, and so the learning challenge during this period is associated with product (ESRI 2007). Much time and energy are focused on preparation for the examination and family, peers and indeed the school community often wholly endorse this emphasis. As a result, the student, whether in a place of spiritual growth or not, is not afforded the space to engage due to outside influences. Again the echoes of Harris and Moran (1998) and their 'age' theory in relation to these students' first State examination rings true. Given that 'progress, purpose and product' are the leading learning challenges associated with the three junior-cycle years at school, it is necessary to take this research into careful consideration when planning a programme of faith development within a post-primary school.

2.7 Which Year Group and Why?

The analysis of cognitive development during adolescence is consistently influenced by the seminal work of Piaget (1956). Adolescent 'thinking' is known as 'abstract' thinking (Lehalle 2006).

Because of Piaget's (1956) formal operational thought construct, it is suggested that adolescents have the cognitive ability to appreciate fully this seminal reshaping of their identity. Furthermore, they possess the self-consciousness to feel it more intensely. In what may be viewed as an effort to respond to this period of transition, one that is often difficult and disheartening for a young person, the Irish educational system has designed an aptly entitled fourth year of education – Transition Year (TY), where the teenager can experience what Erikson calls a 'psycho-social moratorium'. Erikson (1968, p.156) suggests that this 'psycho-social moratorium' constitutes a positive intervention to identity crises and thus a pathway to constructing a coherent identity. TY is effectively a year of trying new things while not having to make a commitment to 'whom' one is becoming. In light of the literature, TY became the year of choice for the SFF programme.

In Irish Spiritan schools, TY is obligatory hence participants in the SFF programme are in the midst of a moratorium. By opting into the SFF programme they are taking the opportunity to explore their identity (as they do with many other TY modules) within a faith context. It is noteworthy that in previous years approximately 18% of the student cohort opted-in to the SFF programme (Walsh 2010-2013).

TY students have coped with the three aforementioned learning challenges (ESRI, 2004; 2006; 2007), and have most likely made the further transition from concrete operational religious thought to formal operational thought (Piaget 1952). Further, the TY students would be in what Santrock (2001) describes as the latter stages of operational thought where adolescents now test out the products of their reasoning against experience. Santrock (2001, p.106) adds that 'an intellectual balance is restored, as the adolescent accommodates to the cognitive upheaval that has occurred. SGN (2010, p.153) validates a Christian peer-ministry programme with TYs and holds that the students 'should be invited to consider committing themselves at a series of levels to service within the Christian community...'. Perhaps this is not just an appropriate time to invite students to become involved in training and faith development for peer ministry, but rather a critical time to invite them. As Kay and Francis (1996, p.30) found that it is around this age group that the 'decline in attitudes towards Christianity takes place' and they caution that it is at this age the drift from the churches is most apparent.

2.8 The Sacrament of Confirmation

As a Christian faith community, the desire to continue to grow and develop as the people of God finds expression in the sacrament of Confirmation. When this sacrament is celebrated Christians

renew their baptismal promises and receive again the gift of the Holy Spirit that strengthens their 'bond' (*RM 26*) within the faith community. The seven sacraments connect Catholics with the ministry of Jesus, his life, passion, death and resurrection. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out to the apostles in the Upper room. The same Spirit is poured out to all Christians at Baptism and again at Confirmation to empower them to become the Body of Christ in the world as well as being able to proclaim Christ in word and deed. (Walsh 2007). SGN (2010) notes that Confirmation is 'the sacrament of growth in the Holy Spirit' (SGN 2010, p. 78). In the Irish context, as well as in many other countries, Confirmation is celebrated in the final year of primary school. It is the catechesis of this sacrament that provides a key focus for the SFF programme.

2.8.1 Share the Good News and Confirmation

Share the Good News (SGN) (2010) points to the need for reflection on our understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Further, it offers a helpful theological principle for the Sacrament of Confirmation to be celebrated as a sacrament of initiation and preparation as opposed to a sacrament of final entry into and maturity in the Catholic Church. Of the three levels of faith proposed by Tuohy and Cairns (2000 p.150), and noted in the SGN (2010), it is respectfully suggested that the students who opt-in to the SFF programme are among those who are in the second and / or third level of faith, known as the 'Evangelisation' and 'Support' levels (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.199). They have a basic openness to exploring faith, and at the 'Support' level, students have 'already made a commitment to the world of religion' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.199). Mentoring and support are suggested as the appropriate and most meaningful ways of affording such students the opportunity to develop further their faith experience, spirituality, emotional wellbeing, resilience and thus their holistic development. Tuohy and Cairns (2000) cite four further areas that take on a vital significance in terms of this experience, namely, language, participation, space and process.

2.9 Language, Participation, Space and Process

2.9.1 Language

In Youth 2K, Tuohy and Cairns (2000) suggest that those involved in ministry should develop symbols that 'speak to the culture and concerns of young people', (2000, p.200) and adopt language that will illuminate as well as captivate the religious imagination. They found that the language adolescents were interested in was that of poetry instead of prose, songs instead of Scripture. I added 'a rap' to the SFF programme to experiment with the above concept and it remains to be seen to what extent it will be effective. Interestingly, Kenny (2003, p.12) writes that the language of faith

is often deemed effeminate for young males who are exploring their religious as well as their masculine identity, 'words' such as healing, loving, meekness, forgiveness are seen as soft and more likely to appeal to males who are more disposed to their femininity. Steinberg (2002) holds that from a very early age boys are socialised to desist from holding any feminine traits and are 'judged deviant if they show any signs of femininity' (2002, p.284). Girls, on the other hand, although perhaps pressurised to become more feminine are not sanctioned for holding on to more masculine traits. It is deemed appropriate to add that the boys in the SFF programme are attending Catholic rugby schools, a point that may be pertinent to the above comment and fuel the masculinity of participants albeit of non-quantifiable or even identifiable significance. However, the language of religion is in its essence symbolic and it ought to be a quest of any faith development programme to create age- and stage-appropriate language that is true to the tenets of faith while at the same time engaging the adolescent mind and experience in a creative, relevant and authentic way.

2.9.2 Participation

'Strategies that promote participation' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.201) constitute a very significant aspect of faith development planning today. Youth 2K (2000) holds that it is necessary to involve participation in faith development from the outset. One may add that it is beneficial to involve the 'learning by doing' model (Hendrick 2011) in any such programme for adolescents as active participation embeds the learning and provides a progressive trail for the emotional journey associated with the particular faith-directed content. Collins (2010) agrees when he notes that evangelists have found the value of praxis, as males especially are affirmed 'through tasks and activities' (2010, p. 241). Thus in an area such as faith development, one can only agree with research (Lee and Murdock 2001; Hendrick 2011; Hederman 2012) suggesting that collaborative learning, group work and active methodologies all need to be considered in order to create effective and authentic connections between the religious rhetoric and the adolescent reality.

2.9.3 Space

A third significant factor suggested by Tuohy and Cairns (2000, p.201) as supportive for teenagers in faith development is space. Hederman (2012) echoes this sentiment and states that there is much more to life than the science and technology that often stifle the environment. The 'more' he speaks of is 'an inner garden of the imagination which each of us should be allowed to cultivate' (2012, p.50). Hederman (2012, p.55) also references Martin Buber's (1878-1965) *Ich und Du* philosophy. Buber (1923) held that we are defined by an I-It and an I-Thou existence. The 'it' references the

way we experience or sense the world and everything in it. The 'Thou' references the way we experience the world through living relationships. In Buber's (1923) view, all of our relationships bring us ultimately into relationship with God, who is the eternal Thou. Hederman (2012) proposes Buber's (1923) philosophy as an original model of education that alternates the emphasis in the educational dialogue between leader and learner onto the 'space' between them. Hederman (2012, p.56) asserts that the 'secret of education is transmission from person to person.' In agreement with Hryniuk (2005) who supports a 'contemplative approach to youth ministry' (2005, p.140) it would seem that space to 'live' with a concept and allow it to ruminate is beneficial to adolescents, especially from the point of view of establishing a developing faith perspective and developing a spiritual formation.

2.9.4 Process

'Process' is the final necessity for any faith development programme, as cited by Tuohy and Cairns (2000). The concept of process suggests that one needs to become aware of the 'different transitions' experienced by teenagers (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.201). It may be suggested that any stage on the lifespan, and in particular adolescence, there is not a progressive set of steps whereby each individual makes headway at the same rate or level. Even within similar contexts, developmental milestones are different: urban, rural, race, environment, personal experience and so on impact on the process of transition in an adolescent. Thus, to be aware of and to allow for differentiation in the process of becoming is an essential criterion for faith development programmes. Tuohy and Cairns (2000) found that the transition into post-primary school marked a move away from the local parish. Perhaps it may be suggested that while many primary-school children participate as altar servers and post-Confirmation tend to leave this role, their loss of role leads to a loss of the connectedness that they may have shared, and so it may follow that they also lose their sense of belonging to a faith community. Other life occurrences for the adolescent involve the development of intimate relationships and difficult choices of future study and career. As referenced earlier, Harris and Moran (1998, p.110), suggest that the 'age' and 'Age' have a significant impact on one's spirituality and faith development. Thus adolescence (age) is a heightened time of development in the lifespan (Erikson 1980), and to add, one's environment and life choices (Age) involves further impact on development as illustrated in Marcia's (1980) crisis-to-commitment continuum.

Perhaps it is not only called for but is in fact an imperative measure that each of the above recommendations by Tuohy and Cairns (2000) be taken into consideration in faith development

programme planning for adolescents if the development of a religious sensibility is to be engaged in a life-giving and holistic way. Further, in agreement with Kay and Francis (1996), it is necessary to dovetail the rhetoric and the reality i.e. the religious and educational policies of a Catholic school with the actual religious and faith development needs of the student body.

2.10 'Belonging' as Life Affirming

In their groundbreaking work on the need to belong, Baumeister and Leary (1995) hold that achieving a sense of belonging in a community is both productive and life affirming at any stage during an individual's life span. It may also be especially life affirming during times that are marked by commitment to identity (Marcia 1980). Drawing on the seminal work of Erik Erikson (1959, 1963, 1968), Marcia (1980, p.161) focuses on identity primarily in adolescence and argues that in order to determine the status of an individual's identity, one must explore the degree to which he or she has committed to or is in crises with two distinct spheres, namely, 'occupation and ideological goals.' Further, the two components of a mature identity are crisis and commitment. Marcia (1980, p.162) defines crisis as 'the adolescent's period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives' as well as 'the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits'. One may suggest that to experience a sense of connectedness as a result of the belonging and relatedness experienced in a particular life sphere, for example, occupation choice, gender roles, politics ideology or in this instance religion, may contribute to an individual's movement from Marcia's (1980), above mentioned crises status to commitment status.

In a helpful discussion of the Rite of Christian Initiation, Drumm and Gunning (1999, p.30) propose a more lavish and participative celebration of the sacraments of initiation and argue that 'effective initiation guarantees a cohesiveness and security and bequeaths committed members to future generations.' I suggest that it is equally important to provide support structures of faith formation that endorse and engage the awakening of a sense of belonging for the new full members of the Church. Effective initiation may not remain effective long after the sacrament's ceremonial has dissipated if the recipients are not afforded the opportunity to reflect critically and to explore the possibilities of integrating faith into their daily lives.

2.11 Faith Friends

'Faith Friends' is a Church concept. It exists in many parishes, towns and cities worldwide, especially in the context of catechesis for Confirmation. A contemporary Irish production of the 'Faith Friends' concept comes in the form of 'You Shall be My Witnesses' (Mahon 2009). This

programme is designed as a resource for members of parish teams to encourage, challenge and invite parents and the wider parish community to become more actively involved in the catechesis for Confirmation of local children. The programme explores what it means to belong to the Christian family, the tenets of Christian faith, the gift of the Holy Spirit and how those involved can witness to the activity of the Holy Spirit in and through human experience (Mahon 2009).

2.11.1 Spiritan Faith Friends

The SFF programme is a religious faith development programme that comprises a leadership-training module and a peer-ministry module. It involves TY students and sixth-class pupils who are preparing to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation. It invites TY students to engage in leadership training and peer ministry thus becoming more actively involved in leading catechesis for Confirmation. Presently, this particular 'Faith Friends' concept is unique as it comprises two modules: a Christian leadership-training module and a faith-sharing module (as above in the You Shall Be My Witnesses programme). The SFF Christian leadership-training module entails training the TY students over a period of eight weeks while the faith-sharing module involves the newly-trained TY leaders and the sixth-class pupils from the junior school working together on a five to one ratio over a number of one-hour sessions.

Hendrick (2011) contends that a basic tenet of learning theory is that people learn by doing and so it is important that TY students not only learn about leadership but that they also learn how to be leaders. For a faith development programme to achieve its aim, it is imperative that the adolescents involved actually lead in religious faith. This means that the TY students spend time exploring and articulating their own understanding and experience of faith. The participants are offered the opportunity to lead the sixth-class pupils in religious faith, from a position of religious faith. The SFF process spans two term periods and culminates in the coming together of both groups to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation with lavish symbolism, vigorous voices and thunderous 'amens'.

2.11.2 Open to Whom?

The SFF programme is designed to be open to students of all levels of religious faith (Tuohy and Cairns 2000). The process depicted in **Figure 2** below begins with development and moves to development of potential of adolescent-owned faith. This is an aspirational pathway for the programme, a subliminal layering that that has the potential to move or pause at any time. The researcher/FDO seeks to allow the participants to explore possibilities and opportunities for

development in keeping with authentic faith development, as discussed earlier, and the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) stance employed in this research. [AI (Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987) is a mode of collective inquiry and change capitalising on the positive and generative potential thus maximising what is shown to work well and will continue to do so into the future rather than focusing primarily on what is negative or deficient.] AI will be discussed in greater detail later in Chapter 3 of this study.

Development	
Development of potential	
Development of potential of adolescent	Appreciative Inquiry
Development of potential of adolescent faith	
Development of potential of adolescent owned faith	

Figure 2 The SFF Faith Development Process (Walsh 2012)

2.12 Experience and Opportunity

The TY students who opt for this programme have celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation in the Catholic Church. However, Tuohy and Cairns (2000) consider that many Irish teenagers feel they have not yet been afforded the opportunity to activate their full membership of the Church and to become mature Christian adults. Young Irish people articulate a desire to have an identity and a sense of belonging to a faith community but do not see an obvious space or role whereby this may be achieved. Tuohy and Cairns (2000) also note that adolescents find personal experience and the opportunity to participate deeply valuable. In contrast to this, the adolescent's experiences of Church were often found to be highly impersonal and non-participative. In agreement with this finding, Kay and Francis (1996) held that the mainstream Christian Churches have lost the place they once held as mediators of faith and spirituality. Thus one may suggest that active participation in a programme can promote a sense of belonging.

2.13 Belonging

An overarching factor of any adolescent programme in a faith development or indeed a secular context is to create a connectedness among the participants that can evolve from a sense of belonging and relatedness (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Groff 1992; Osterman 2000; Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Faircloth 2009). Osterman (2000, p.325) refers to studies in psychology that speak of the 'experience of belonging' as a significant factor in comprehending adolescent behaviour and performance. Baumeister and Leary (1995, p.327) were satisfied that 'the need to belong is associated with differences in cognitive processes, emotional patterns, behavior, health, and wellbeing'. It is important to juxtapose these findings to those of Tuohy and Cairns (2000) whose

research recorded teenagers as feeling a lack of belonging in the Church. Indeed, the same research asserts that 'when they did find a sense of belonging, it brought with it openness to personal spiritual formation and reflection' (2000, p.56). In an important piece of research entitled 'Teens Teaching Youth', Groff (1992) comments that being recognised and respected by adults, peers, and younger youth 'enhances self-esteem and teens' sense of belonging in their community' (1992, p.4). Faircloth (2009) adds that most young people feel they 'are invisible to many adults and adult systems' (2009, p.327) and therefore often feel excluded from the faith community that is led and coordinated by adults. Faircloth (2009, p.323) also points out that much specialist research in the area of 'belonging' shows that a sense of belonging is 'indispensable', and is now being proposed as the foundation for motivation and accomplishment. It is noteworthy how Perkins (2009) describes an apparent contradiction between the adolescent peer relationships that are viewed as significant and ultimately most worthy to the adolescent while other research (Groff 1992; Ostermann 2000; Faircloth 2009) shows that the need for adult endorsement and approval to enhance adolescent self-esteem and sense of belonging are not only worthy but critical for adolescents.

2.13.1 Connectedness arising out of a Sense of Belonging

In their extensive review of the relevant literature, Baumeister and Leary (1995) sought to determine whether there was adequate empirical evidence to conclude that the need to belong is a fundamental human motivation. According to their work, belonging to a club, group or community gives a shared sense of identity and enhances self-esteem, (Baumeister and Leary 1995). In addition, it is helpful to refer to Groff (1992) who carried out empirical research by evaluating Teens Reaching Youth (TRY) retreats by administering pre and post-tests during the programmes. TRY was designed to 'bridge three life stages from adults to teens to younger youths' (Groff 1992, p.4). This model involves adults who worked with teens as mentors and in turn the adolescents worked with younger youth along with being part of the teen team, giving the younger children information and at the same time acting as positive role models. Groff found that the adolescents felt 'needed' and 'respected' as a result of their participation in the programme (1992, p.4). It is proposed that developing a sense of belonging adds to the holistic development of an adolescent and therefore can only enhance any community of which they are a part and more specifically a school community within a particular denomination whose bedrock and founding ethos is Christian by name and communal by nature.

2.14 Creating Space for God

For young people whose faith is important to them, being involved in a peer-ministry programme ought to empower and engage them in the process of developing an emerging sense of religious identity. As the above research suggests, belonging to a club, group or community gives a shared sense of identity and enhances self-esteem. Ellerbrock and Kiefer (2014) add that when students feel known and accepted by their peers as well as having 'academic and emotional support from their peers', it greatly contributes to their sense of belonging, (2014. p.12). However, belonging to a group that is framed by faith, witness to that faith is often a first for this age group and my findings will work to explore the depth of its relevance. In an article entitled *Creating Space for God*, Hryniuk (2005, p.145) reports that if adolescents are afforded an opportunity to explore their spirituality and faith tradition together with the chance to engage in social justice, this 'has the potential to respond to the deepest needs of young persons for meaning, belonging, and a sense of religious identity.' Osterman (2000, p.327) holds that

> being accepted, included, or welcomed leads to positive emotions, such as happiness, elation, contentment, and calm, while being rejected, excluded, or ignored leads to often intense negative feelings of anxiety, depression, grief, jealousy, and loneliness.

Thus as noted above it is essential to take cognizance of the holistic dimension of adolescent development incorporating the spiritual self. Engebretson (2004, p.274) concludes that 'along with self-commitment (connectedness with self), this category of connection with others was of immense importance' to the teenage participants. Thus it may be fair to deduce that there is rich substantive research that promotes belonging as that which is not only necessary but needed by adolescents as they grow and develop. The need to create constructs whereby teenagers who search for meaning and values can engage with that search and allow its expression to be made manifest within a religious context is suggested as crucial to the success of faith development for this age group and for the cohesiveness and security of future committed members of the Catholic faith.

2.14.1 Confirmation and a Sense of Belonging

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1309) explains that the catechesis for Confirmation strives to 'awaken a sense of belonging to the Church' and thus strengthens the recipient's union with the whole Christian community. Unfortunately, in the Irish context the sense of belonging is apparently not awakened as in many dioceses the sacrament of Confirmation has become in effect the

sacrament of exit (Tuohy and Cairns 2000; McHale 2006; Ryan 2008). It is important to note that research from other countries reflects the same experience (Kay and Francis 1996; Engbretson 2005; Creasy Dean 2010).

2.15 Empirical Evidence

There is much further empirical research that has close proximity to this author's aims for the present research (de Souza, *et al* 2002; Karcher and Lee 2002; Engebretson 2004; Engebretson 2006; Engebretson 2007; Tirri and Quinn 2010). These findings may be considered at this point as they serve to expound the central aims of the research undertaken for this thesis and are both supportive and directive to the study as a whole. The concept of a 'value added' benefit to belonging in a community and / or a community of faith and the sense of connectedness that may arise from it will also be explored (Groff 1992; Osterman 2000; Maroney 2007; Faircloth 2009). Further, it is interesting to note in the research references to follow, that some adolescents view the interconnectivity between religiosity and spirituality and how it seems perhaps more 'authentic' for an adolescent to be 'spiritual' as opposed to being 'religious' (Kay and Francis 1996; Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Engebretson 2004; Good and Willoughby 2006; Maroney 2007; Tirri and Quinn 2009).

2.15.1 Connecting: Teenage Boys, Spirituality and Religious Education

Engaging closely with the literature, Engebretson (2007) acted to allow teenage boys' voices to be heard and then analysed those voices in the light of her theoretical framework. Beginning with a Focus Group Interview (FGI) that engaged twenty boys, Engebretson proceeded to craft a questionnaire that was completed by almost a thousand boys. The questionnaires were analysed using content analysis and the modified questionnaire that arose was answered by a further two hundred and eighty-eight boys.

Engebretson (2004-2007) constructed a picture of the Australian adolescent male as having a distinctive spirituality and, in the process, highlighted numerous and significant strategies to support parents and teachers in their endeavours to nourish and to energise the seeds of faith in young people. For religious educators in all-male denominational schools, this study is particularly informative. However, one might argue that the study is also supportive of religious educators and pastors to both genders. Research has shown (Kay and Francis 1996; Maroney 2007; Good and Willoughby 2006; Engebretson 2007; Bussing *et al* 2010) that females are more open than males to faith-based development and religious-community involvement. In saying this, my study has

actively voiced some of the differences between male and female spirituality consistent with previous studies from Kay and Francis (1996) in the United Kingdom and Hoge (1991) in the United States and referenced by Kenny (2003) in Ireland. Gender distinction in faith development is relevant throughout the lifespan but critically relevant during adolescence at the identity formation stage (Erikson 1968; Marcia 1980, Cicognani *et al* 2014). Thus Engebretson adds the strong voice of Australian adolescent males to the dialogue on adolescent Religious Education and Spirituality that has in turn impacted on the leadership-training module in the belonging SFF programme.

2.15.2 Constructing a Definition of Spirituality

It is interesting to explore the construction of the definition of spirituality that guided this research. Engebretson's (2007) definition was shaped by the classic work of James (1958) and the theory of the Christian philosopher, Donald Evans (1979). The author dovetailed their thought with that of Harris and Moran's (1998) writing in religious education and spirituality with particular emphasis on '"connectedness" as a unifying principle in spirituality', (Engebretson 2007, p.18). I suggest that the final sculpted definition of spirituality embraces all the elements of contemporary adolescent spirituality while at the same time being secured by the deep thinking of Christian writers.

> Spirituality is: (a) experience of the sacred other which is accompanied by feelings of wonder, joy, love, trust and hope (James, 1958; McBrien, 1994; Dreyer, 1995; Harris and Moran, 1998); (b) Spirituality enhances connectedness within the self, with others and with the world, (James, 1958; Evans, 1979; Harris and Moran,1998); (c) Spirituality illuminates lived experience. (Harris and Moran, 1998); (d) Spirituality may be named in new and re-defined ways, or though the beliefs, rituals, symbols, values, stories of religious traditions, (Harris and Moran, 1998), (Engebretson 2007, p.18).

We see that Engebretson's (2007) definition opens by stating that spirituality is an experience of the sacred. Engebretson (2007) clearly roots spirituality in an encounter with God. Echoing Harris and Moran's (1998) definition of spirituality as 'our way of being in the world' (1998, p.109), Engebretson (2007) continues by noting that a 'key component' (2007, p.20) of spirituality is that it is guided by age and Age. This is a further reference to Harris and Moran, (1998, p. 109) when they suggest that spirituality 'illuminates' one's 'lived experience'. As discussed earlier, the first refers to the age of the person and the second refers to the time in which that person lives. Thus in a Christian construct, our age and our era all serve to carry us onwards towards the 'mystery at the

core of the universe' (Harris and Moran 1998, p.109). Engebretson's (2007) definition continues to be all-encompassing and engages with self, others, the environment and God where one has the capacity to experience the 'ultimate environment' (Fowler 1981, p.24) that is the Kingdom of God (Luke 17:21), the cornerstone of Catholic theology. Engebretson's (2007) definition of spirituality, has been incorporated into other theoretical frameworks for academic researchers (Büssing *et al* 2010). As Engebretson's (2007) work is closely aligned to my research, it was decided to adopt the above definition as part of the theoretical lens I worked with in this study.

2.16 Adolescent Males

The sample used by Engebretson (2007) in the above research comprised Australian adolescent schoolboys attending Catholic schools. Engebretson (2007) explains her objective for exploring 'how teenage boys experience and express spirituality' (2007, p.25) as being rooted in the 'the feminization of religion that is the experience of all mainstream Churches, (Kay & Francis 1996; Kenny 2003). Engebretson (2007) clearly disagrees with Steinberg (2002) when she states that adolescent males are not 'religious', (2007, p.25) and that 'spirituality brings with it well documented resilience, (2007, p.23). Engebretson (2007) then points to a vacuum that often exists for young boys by stating that teenage boys need 'education for spirituality' in their lives, (2007, p.26). Drawing on Kindlon and Thompson's (1999), interpretation of the story of Cain and Abel, Cain's turmoil, having killed his brother, was spiritual. Engebretson (2007) defends the obvious limitations of the sample choice by submitting that if Kindlon and Thompson's (1999), analysis 'reflects even a small amount of the life experience of a small number of boys, their spirituality needs to be given our earnest attention' (Engebretson 2007, p.27). Engebretson's (2003-2007) salient research has been a valid reference for many studies on related topics such as Maroney, (2009), Büssing *et al* (2010) or Parker and Hoon (2013) and is a valid reference point for this inquiry. Engebretson (2004, p.203) sought to find ways of developing 'the real spirituality of the teenage boys who attend Catholic schools in Australia'. Taking four years to work through 7 stages of research she began with the development of a definition of spirituality to formulating the findings and refine them with the male participants' teachers. Her research identified 'seven characteristics of boys' spirituality' (2004, p.203). The characteristics are all pertinent to the author's research especially the characteristics identified as 'a spirituality that is inspired by others', 'a spirituality found and developed in friendships', and 'a spirituality that seeks reflection and is open to prayer' (Engebretson 2004 p.204–5), will serve to guide further elements of this study.

2.17 A Threshold Church

With respect to the above-mentioned 'seven characteristics of boys' spirituality' (2004, p.203), a leading Catholic theologian of the Church in the twentieth century, Yves Congar (1904-1995) presents an innovative and original vision for the renewal of the Church. Refusing to accept either an ever-decreasing ghettoised Church or the status quo based on religious observance but without much emphasis on personalised faith and a spirituality rooted in faith, Congar proposes a third way, namely, a threshold Church that can support those who are outside the sacramental life of the Church for whatever reason. He explains the threshold Church as follows:

> To accept and even encourage the existence of two regimes [a threshold Church and the Church as sacrament], making a distinction between a link with Christ, even with the Church, and the Sacrament. In any case, to provide areas which would represent a kind of threshold Church, a Church for catechumens, in order to support the spiritual life of those whose faith is unsure and, above all, of those who are unable to participate fully in the sacramental life. (Congar 1977 p.158)

Congar (1977) makes a distinction between the threshold Church and the Church in its fullness and asserts unambiguously 'the fullness of communion with the fullness of the gifts God gives through Christ and in the Spirit' (Congar, 1977 p.160) was deeply aware of the importance of the liturgy as a means of catechesis and of leading people into close personal union with Christ. In his view, what was essential was 'to mention an interior, spiritual element without, however, transforming the whole notion of belonging to the Church into something invisible.

2.17.1 An Expression of Spirituality

My exploration of Christian-leadership training and of a peer-ministry programme takes account of the fact that the experience of the programme happens within the social and religious context of a denominational Catholic school community and so it is necessary to note that support for each student's sense of belonging is intrinsically written into the Catholic ethos of the school. De Souza (2004) affirms that leaders/teachers in any educational community are called to address the spiritual dimension of their students. A pilot study by de Souza *et al* (2002) proposes that 'the levels of connectedness that young people experience are linked to the spiritual expressions of young people which provide them with a sense of self-worth and which help them to find meaning and purpose in their everyday' (2004, p.126). This thinking is in line with Karcher and Lee (2010) and Whitlock (2006; 2007) who define connectedness (and especially within a Christian school community) as

that which is of a reciprocal nature. Having earlier quoted the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the relational nature of faith (CCC 166) it is relevant to now look briefly at *Almost Christian*, a recent publication from Kenda Creasy Dean (2010) that reflects on the results of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR 2002-05) in the USA.

2.18 National Study of Youth and Religion

According to Creasy Dean (2010) the *National Study of Youth and Religion* (NSYR 2002-5) registered eleven findings of which seven and eight are particularly noteworthy. Finding number seven states: 'Supply and demand matters to the spiritual lives of teenagers.' Finding number eight states: 'Spiritual and religious understanding are very weak among American teenagers.' Creasy Dean (2010, p.10) suggests that the American Church's lack of ability to meaningfully 'share the core content of Christian faith with young people, points to a Church that no longer addresses the issues of being human, and whose God is therefore unimportant'. These findings echo those found among the Irish youths interviewed in Youth 2K (Tuohy and Cairns 2000) and later among Australian youths in Maroney's (2007) study who state that a sense of personal values as received from family and relationships was highly appreciated by young people. Further, it was found that for adolescents, one of the main areas of alienation from religion was that the Church 'had no impact on this area of personal development' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.197).

2.18.1 Religiosity and Spirituality

With this points outlined in the above section in mind, it is deemed pertinent to explore adolescent thought and understanding of religiosity and spirituality. Of particular interest is a study by Good and Willoughby (2006) who investigated the interaction between religiosity and spirituality on the psychosocial adjustment pertinent to adolescents. Defining religiosity as 'Church attendance' and spirituality as 'personal beliefs in God or a higher power' (2006, p.41), the researchers acknowledge the relatedness of both concepts but work with them as quite separate constructs. They note that the positive association between religiosity and psychosocial well-being has been well documented and especially in relation to risk-behaviour. Good and Willoughby (2006) explore the inconsistent findings for Church attendance in relation to one's personal belief system and the emergence of an interest in contemporary spirituality as opposed to a religion in adolescents. The results proved thought-provoking as they partially supported the researchers hypothesis that 'adolescents who attended Church and believe in God or a living power would report the most positive pattern of outcomes' (Good and Willoughby 2006, p.51). What may be especially striking about this research is that the Church-attending adolescents who did not believe in God reported 'nearly identical'

patterns of outcomes as those who were Church attending believers (2006, p.51). This would indicate that facilitators of an adolescent faith-based programme should not discourage non-Church goers or non-believers if they wish to take part as the participants evidently will benefit on a variety of levels (if not a faith level) from the sense of belonging and connectedness offered by a youth-based programme. Also, it is significant to note that Good and Willoughby (2006, p.52) add that 'it is possible that self-reported belief in God or a higher power may even change from day to day'.

2.18.2 The Role of Religion and Spirituality in the Development of Purpose

Further salient research carried out by Tirri and Quinn (2009, p.201), explored 'the role of religion and spirituality in the development of purpose'. The authors worked with Hay and Nye's (1998) three categories of spiritual sensitivity and added a fourth called 'community sensing' which they note had been previously created by Tirri, Nokelainen and Ubani (2006). Community sensing is a spiritual sensitivity that centers on the experience of community and 'other forms of communal spiritual experience', (Tirri and Quinn 2009, p.203). As a spiritual sensitivity this is significant and is deemed closely proximate to the author's field of study given that her context is within a Catholic school community.

One of the participants in the case study above discusses his Church practice as that which builds his identity and gives him 'the roots and guidance for the future' (Tirri and Quinn 2009, p.211). I found this same building of identity through Church affiliation in my research to date (Walsh 2013). However, it is interesting to note that in conclusion Tirri and Quinn (2009) state that purpose need not be based in the religious or the spiritual, and continues by agreeing that young people who 'engage in their quest for self within a rich spiritual context (which may be a religious community)' (2009, p.213), are afforded a solid chance of sustaining purpose in their lives. Thus in agreement with King (2008) the above research tends to suggest that a community of faith may well be fertile ground for adolescents as they search for meaning and identity and explore the deeper questions in life.

2.19 The Catholic School

Staying with the theme of adolescence and spirituality, an exciting piece of Australian research by Maroney (2007, p.22) explored '…Contemporary Youth Spirituality among Senior School Students in Catholic Schools'. This research speaks to one of the questions in my research, that is, the effect that the overarching environment or context (Catholic school in this study) has on the faith development of the participants involved. Maroney (2007) wanted to know how much influence the

Catholic religious tradition in school had on the developing spirituality of an adolescent. He engaged with three Catholic schools in Australia and invited late teens to complete a questionnaire and followed up by holding a focus group interview with approximately nine students in each group. With an almost even split between the sexes three themes were explored; moral and faith development, contemporary spirituality and aspects of youth culture (Maroney 2007). The findings showed that family, friends, conscience and social norms were all presented in the data. In agreement with previous research (Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Engebretson 2007), parents were named as a 'primary influence' (2007, p.29) on the faith development of their sons and daughters. It is interesting to note also that priests and teachers had the least influence, (Maroney 2009). Is this an argument for introducing a specific faith development co-ordinator into a Catholic school, one that is separate from the teaching body of the school? Spirituality was found to be a blend of the sacred and the secular with neither being mutually exclusive. One might ask if these findings suggest that on the one hand the students are open and willing to develop their spirituality in and through their close relationships and the world around them, but on the other hand they are closed to the exploration of their spirituality in religious education class? This may echo the point made by Kay and Francis (1996) as stated above in terms of the Catholic school's religious education policy and each student's reality and needs. It is noteworthy that Perkins (2009) discusses spirituality as a pivotal part of holistic development in adolescence defining spirituality in the secular sense citing low Church attendance and religious affiliation as his rationale for same. It is notable that he follows by inferring that 'while these youth may recognise the value of spirituality and religion, they often have no guidance or opportunity to support an exploration of their spiritual dimension' (Perkins 2009, p.382). Congar (1977 p.158) advocates for 'the interior, spiritual element' without which the whole notion of belonging to the Church becomes invisible while Lane (2003) defines the theology of faith in terms of a personal act as well as an adherence to the code, creed and cult of the Church, I suggest that a space be created for the spirituality of the SFF participants to grow and to develop. A spirituality outside of a faith tradition is 'rootless' (1998, p.116), as Harris and Moran have suggested (1998). Thus the SFF programme begins by situating spirituality and faith development in a religious context and is designed to guide and to support participants (through education for faith development) towards a personal and communal experience of their spiritual and faith formation rooted in the Christian tradition.

2.19.1 Life-Long Faith

The conclusion of Maroney's (2007) study suggests that the Catholic school while helpful in introducing students to faith, religion and a sense of spirituality 'did not facilitate a life-long

adherence to the Catholic faith and an unquestioning alliance to the Christian tradition' (2007, p.30). I contend that if we are to explore how a Catholic-school education can support life-long faithfulness to Catholicism, surely we must become involved in a longitudinal study beyond the classroom and into the participants' adult years. To engage with teenagers who are in search of meaning and identity is hugely informative in terms of the reality of adolescent spirituality and religiosity during that stage of the life span but can hardly be projected as definitive for the future as per the findings above. One is reminded of Good and Willoughby (2006, p.52) who state that for this age group, belief in 'God or a higher power' can 'change from day to day'. This research will now move to explore the lasting impact with past-participants that may or may not show a residual effect from the SFF programme and how that may or may not present will be of particular interest to this study in terms of 'life-long' (Maroney 2007, p.30) adherence to the Catholic faith.

2.19.2 Spiritan Schools

The Catholic schools that host the SFF programme are under the patronage of the Des Places Educational Association (DEA), a trust body set up by the Spiritan congregation. The Spiritans, formerly known as the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and earlier as the Holy Ghost Order, espouse seven core values at the heart of their educational mission. See **Figure 3** below.

Seven Core Values

Openness to the Spirit:
We are guided by the Holy Spirit in our relationships, choices, behaviours and decisions.

A Sense of Community
Working together within our school community and as a community of schools, we value diversity as a gift from God and the foundation for building communities each and every day.

Concern for the Poor
We live in an unequal world where resources are unevenly distributed. From our privileged position we are called to recognise our role in working together to create a just world.

Commitment to Service
Following the examples of Jesus, the gifts and talents that we are blessed with are freely offered in the service of each other and of all the communities we belong to.

Global Vision
Reflecting the missionary outlook of the Congregation, Spiritan education works for the empowerment of peoples and their liberation from injustice and poverty.

High Educational Standards
The realisation of each person's human and spiritual potential to strive for excellence in all areas of life is the goal of Spiritan education.

Personal and Faith Development
The moral, spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and cultural aspects of each student's development is at the heart of the Spiritan vision of Education.

Figure 3 Seven Spiritan Core Values (DEA 1999)

The Spiritan core values form part of the leadership-training module in the SFF programme. During the training sessions the explicit impact of the Spiritan schools' educational mission is explored

with all participants. The seventh core value is at the heart of the entire programme. In addition, the tacit environment of the Spiritan Colleges is of interest to me and I plan to investigate its implicit impact on the participants' sense of their developing faith and / or the support they may have experienced due to the Catholicity of the schools. The 'Vision '08' document from the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference states that

> Catholic schools are part of the Church's continuing mission to carry the life-giving message of Christ to every generation. This gives strength and coherence to the Catholic Church's philosophy of education. For Christians, true human fulfilment and the redemption of society are to be found through faith in Jesus Christ and through service of others in imitation of him' (2008, p.3).

SGN emphasises that the mission statements and policies in Catholic schools should 'reflect a transparently open approach to the established ethos of the school, to its young people themselves and to their religious tradition, experience and beliefs' (2010, p.204).

In agreement with Kay and Francis (1996, p.57) who state that 'Church schools can influence young people toward adopting a more positive attitude toward Christianity, in addition to any influence exerted by home and by Church'. This author agrees that the denominational school has the opportunity to be pivotal in the handing on of faith and in the formation of future faith generations if it works diligently to provide age-and-stage appropriate opportunities. 'Vision '08' (2008, p.8) continues:

> Catholic education values tolerance and inclusiveness. In an increasingly multicultural society, it is open to generous dialogue with Christians of other traditions and those of other faiths and none, while remaining true to its own distinctive ethos.

As referenced above, Kay and Francis (1996, p.58) contend that for some Catholic schools, their 'religious and educational policy does not accurately reflect the religious disposition or needs of the pupils'. This would echo the author's findings in terms of previous cycles of the SFF programme whereby some who register for the programme are openly lapsed Catholics and / or have declared themselves as atheists. However these students feel called to take part as they search for meaning in life and wish to take (as they are welcomed to do) an albeit temporary exploration into faith. It is

also possibile that the attraction of the SFF programme is the leadership-training element and / or also the fact that it is quite a different concept of faith development in comparison to existing school- and / or parish-based religious education and liturgical experience. As noted above, it is the policy of the SFF programme to encourage all who wish to take part and to support them at whatever level (Tuohy and Cairns 2000) best suits their needs. It is noteworthy to heed Walbank (2012, p.179) who holds that in theory Catholic schools are open and inclusive but in practice head teachers are 'struggling with the desire to faithfully proclaim Catholicism', while 'admitting and nurturing those who are not Catholic'. Perhaps the lack of programmes to encourage all students in Catholic schools to take part in meaningful faith development again greatly echoes the thinking of Kay and Francis (1996).

2.20. 'Your' Catholic School

In his research Maroney (2007, p.26) asked a very pertinent question: How has your Catholic education helped you understand yourself and your place in the world? The findings hold that the participants found prayer, morality and the retreat experiences the most helpful in terms of their search for meaning and values. Maroney (2007) concludes that there was a predominantly negative response towards the influence of Catholic schooling and its ability to 'facilitate a clear view of the world, and in fact did not provide clear answers to the big questions' (2007, p.29). It is my intention to explore this specific aspect of Spiritan schools by asking the participants of the LI inquiry if their Catholic school had an impact on them as they took part in the SFF programme. This element of Maroney's (2007) research will prove effective in the direction and methodology of the present study.

2.21 Conclusion

This literature review began by introducing catechesis as a special moment in the journey of evangelisation. It has explored elements of the theoretical background to the SFF programme and engaged with relevant literature on the subject of adolescent (especially male adolescent) faith. It is hoped that Fowler's (1981) FDT, Lane's (2003) exploration of faith development, SGN (2010) and other relevant research will provide an informed theoretical framework from which to work. Keeping in mind the definition of connectedness as 'a response to relatedness and belonging', (Karcher and Lee 2002, p.93), there is much salient research that suggests a sense of connectedness promotes a more resilient adolescent (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Karcher and Lee 2002). It is also shown in the research that developing spiritually offers strong resilience especially for adolescents (Tuohy and Cairns 2000; de Souza *et al* 2002; Engebretson 2007; Tirri and Quinn

2010). In the lasting impact of this research it will be interesting to see if a sense of connectedness as a result of belonging to and participating in the SFF programme has supported faith formation thus impacting on the participants' resilience and their ability to flourish as they embark upon their individual levels of crises and commitment (Marcia 1980).

Equally, studies have shown the benefits of peer learning as a means of increasing social outcomes and connectedness (Groff 1992; Lee and Murdock 2001; Micari *et al* 2008). This author suggests that a peer-ministry programme inviting adolescents to participate in active learning, group work and collaboration from a faith perspective within a denominational school community may actively promote human relationships founded on Gospel values. It may thus serve to develop faith (Tuohy and Cairns 2000) for the adolescent male participants during the programme and perhaps beyond that stage.

There is much research presented on teenage spirituality and religiosity citing the ongoing drift away from organised faith by adolescent groups (Kay and Francis 1996; Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Engebretson 2004; Kenda Creasy Dean 2010). Among many of its themes it points to the lack of care from previous generations in terms of handing on faith (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, Engbretson 2004; Ceasy Dean 2010). It explores the 'value added' benefit of belonging to a community and / or a community of faith and the sense of connectedness that arises from this community (Groff 1992; Osterman 2000; Maroney 2007; Faircloth 2009). The research reviewed above also shows how the adolescent views the interconnectivity between religiosity and spirituality (Good and Willoughby 2006; Maroney 2007; Tirri and Quinn 2009). As stated above, it is this author's aim to explore belonging in the SFF programme and the sense of connectedness that may arise from that belonging. It is also proposed to see what kind of 'role' is available to an adolescent within the construct of a specific leadership and peer-ministry programme. Finally, I wish to do some preliminary investigations in relation to the denominational school environment that hosts the programme and whether it acted as a catalyst for the impact of the programme.

It is noteworthy that I have not found any empirical research that suggests or explores a programme that can act as an intervention in the adolescent search for identity, meaning, value, belonging and the sense of connectedness that may arise from it within a denominational school community. There is significant lack of research on programmes of evangelisation and catechesis that seek to address the drift from the Churches by offering adolescents the 'remarkable' (CT18) moment Saint John Paul II expressed in Catechesi tradendae. This study will move to produce some validated research

on such a programme and may serve to illuminate its effectiveness at offering an intervention in the faith formation, emerging spirituality and religiosity of the male adolescent in Spiritan schools and beyond into the succeeding life stages.

Chapter 3:   Research Design

3.0 Introduction

This research seeks to evaluate how and if a religious faith development and leadership-training programme, the Spiritan Faith Friends programme (SFF), impacted the religious faith development of male adolescents in Spiritan schools. Further, it explores whether the programme that operates on a 'learning by doing' (Schank 1995; Hendrick 2011) model alters the adolescent participants' sense of connectedness that may arise from the belonging and relatedness they experienced as a result of their active participation in the programme. The definition of connectedness being employed in this research, as defined earlier, is in agreement with Karcher and Lee (2002, p.93). There are two elements to draw from this definition; connectedness and belonging are distinct from each other, yet related. Also, connectedness which in this sense arises out of one's sense of belonging and relatedness has a reciprocal nature, received as well as given. This view is shared by Whitlock (2006, 2007) and is proposed as the bedrock of a Christian community (CCC, 166).

3.1 The Spiritan Faith Friends Programme

The SFF is a religious faith development and leadership TY option. It is being formally evaluated in its fourth cycle. It was informally part of an AR process for three years as it was planned, implemented, evaluated and reflected upon during each cycle. This study formally engaged with the process in its fourth and fifth cycle. It is hoped that by the fifth cycle the programme will have been critically analysed, evaluated and re-presented five times and so will perhaps be fulfilling the aims it initially set out to achieve. The cyclical path of the chosen action-research methodology caused me to engage in a formal critical reflection of the planing, facilitation and evaluation of the programme. This contributed to the SFF programme which on the basis of prior informal evaluations had been positively received by participants. The AR cycle afforded the annual participants an opportunity to offer their reflections and recommendations for the subsequent year. Also they shared their thoughts on the experience and how it did or did not impact their religious faith development. Resulting from initial data analysis and in an effort to add a second strand of inquiry to this research, it was decided to explore any lasting impact the programme may have had on previous participants. In addition, the second strand of inquiry explored any generative (Bushe 2011) impact the programme may have inspired in its participants.

3.2 Paradigm

The way in which one conceives of one's field of inquiry is inevitably shaped by underlying assumptions about reality, truth and values, which may themselves not be readily perceived by the inquirer. Such a framing perspective is frequently called a 'paradigm' in the scholarly literature. A paradigm is a theory, a set of assumptions, a lens through which one sees the world and one's place in it (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Bryman 2004; Creswell 2009). Acknowledging subjectivity or objectivity as a personal starting point illuminates the reality of the paradigm towards which one is drawn.

The two main paradigms of study that have emerged from 20th century philosophical thinking are known as quantitative and qualitative study. Both paradigms are firmly rooted in and guided by specific philosophical assumptions. By choosing one paradigm as opposed to the other, one is already making a statement with regard to one's worldview and the philosophy that underpins it. The ontological assumptions (the nature of reality for the researcher), (Denzin and Lincoln 1994); the epistemological assumptions (the nature of the kind of knowledge the researcher claims in relation to that reality), (Creswell 2007); the axiological assumptions (the role of values in the study), and the methodological assumptions (how the researcher views the entire process of research), (Creswell 2007), provide the foundation for the construction of a body of research. Creswell (2007) adds that 'good research requires making these assumptions, paradigms, and frameworks explicit' (2007, p.15) in and through the entire process of the study. Constructing McNiff's (2005, p.5) 'living process' becomes ever more meaningful and the reshaping and reconfiguring of the research design during this particular study illuminates the essence of such a reality.

3.2.1 Qualitative and Quantitative

Quantitative research emerges from a positivist, empiricist, objectivist and deductive position (Creswell 1994; 2007; Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Bryman 2004) while qualitative research emerges from a post-positivist, interpretative, constructive and inductive position (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Bryman 2004; Creswell 1994; 2007). Although each assumption or position can be interrelated and interconnected with the other in any specific paradigm of study, a central issue divides them, the question whether or not the social world can or should be studied in the same way as the natural world. The term quantitative suggests quantity and numerical calculations, facts and figures that can be generalised and may stand alone. Bryman (2004, p.6) notes that quantitative research 'emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data', he adds that 'as a research

strategy it is deductivist and objectivist and incorporates a natural science model' (2004, p.6). Quantitative data cannot distinguish between people and institutions, thus the natural world and the social world are tested and treated in the same way; the social world becomes quantified in a deductive process and an objective manner.

In contrast 'qualitative' suggests words, concepts and ideas. The ontological position of qualitative research is of a subjective nature with events and individuals being seen as unique and non-generalisable (Cohen *et al* 2007). While the relationship between the researcher and the participants in quantitative research is relatively minimal or non-existent and is usually of an observational status, the relationship between the researcher and the phenomena being studied in qualitative research is interactional, can extend over many months and a relationship can be established (Bryman 2004; Creswell 2007). This observation is most pertinent in an educational setting and in terms of this study one may add that the development of such relationships can often bring about a new layer of relevant unspoken data.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.150) assert that 'action research is based on the premise that professional knowledge is important and can be valuable, but local knowledge is a necessary ingredient in any research'. If one is to engage authentically with participants, their local knowledge, experience and worldview are critical to the process of constructing new meaning. This study takes place at a critical time in the life-span process where participants are in a time of self-discovery and identity formation (Erikson 1968; Marcia 1980; Santrock 2001; Steinberg 2002). It is hoped that the co-generated knowledge from myself as researcher/Faith Development Officer (FDO) and from the participants will embrace the 'multiple realities' (Creswell 2007, p.16) and may serve to inform future practice of religious faith development programmes with adolescents.

3.3 Reflection

When writing action research, McNiff and Whitehead (2009) urge the researcher to spend time in reflection, on his or her core values and if he or she truly espouses them. If it is our living values that drive our research question, guide our epistemological stance and inform our methodology of choice, then my own ontological values of Christian faith rooted in agape love, compassion, tolerance and freedom define my epistemology of adolescent religious faith development and form the bedrock of this study. Through this work, I have come to define my specific ontology as one of creative pragmatism, a combination that bodes well in the educational realm in terms of programme

stimulus and authentic resourcefulness as well as the efficiency and feasibility of any programme within a dynamic and demanding educational environment.

3.4 Social Constructionism

The epistemology of this study stems from social constructionism. I refer to Patton's (2002) exploration of the difference between constructionism and constructivism. Patton (2002) references Crotty's (1998) clear distinction between worldviews when he asserts that constructivists explore the many individual realities constructed by humans and how these constructs impact on life, while constructionists firmly root them in a particular context emphasising 'the hold our culture has on us' (Crotty 1998, p.58). In an effort to engage fully with a social constructionist worldview in this study, it was paramount that the 'multiple realities' Creswell (2007, p.16) that emerged in the findings took cognisance of the social grouping (context and culture of the Church) that hold the entire project in place.

The SFF programme was evaluated by analysing the participants' past and present articulation of how and if it connected with them. This 'connection' took on multiple meanings and realities as the process unfolded and the rhetoric chosen by the participants to describe their connection and presented by the researcher shaped the final theory that emerged from the research. It is fully acknowledged that this rhetoric emerged from adolescent males in Catholic schools. However, in agreement with Kay and Francis (1996), it is necessary to appreciate that the religious and educational policies of Catholic schools may be at odds with the actual religious and faith development practices of the student body. Thus the data analysis of this study worked to be constructionist, inductive, subjective and interpretative.

It is interesting to note that Gergen and Gergen (2008) speaks about social constructionism as relational, collaborative and rooted in the communal as opposed to being independent and individualistic. One suggests that this theory dovetails with Crotty's (1998) distinction noted above and supports social constructionism as a worldview for research that emerges from a Christian community.

3.4.1 Social Constructionism and Connectedness
From a social constructionism viewpoint, the sense of belonging and / or relatedness (Karcher and Lee 2002) that may give rise to a sense of connectedness within this programme can only do so as a result of a personal encounter with the process. However, that personal encounter must be firmly

constructed within the relational and collaborative experiences of the programme (Gergen and Gergen 2008). It is important to add that the end goal of the SFF programme is to root any sense of connectedness that may arise from a belonging and / or relatedness within the Catholic Christian perspective. Social constructionism was deemed an appropriate launch pad for this study as it embraces the multiplicity of experiences and at the same time imbues tolerance, compassion and welcome for that which may emerge from the history and tradition of the individual and / or the social group. This specific mode of research respects the Spiritan educational ethos and echoes 'Vision '08' (2008) that names Catholic education as rooted in the values of tolerance and inclusivity.

The perspective employed had a direct impact on the programme's exploration as each stakeholder had different expectations from the process and each reality was embraced as real. The constructionist researcher works to include each reality as it emerges in and through the qualitative methods of inquiry. The 'multiple realities' Creswell (2007, p.16) were analysed as separate pieces of information and then as an overall independent reality. Creswell (2007) comments that meaning arrives in an inductive fashion as the threads of experience are woven together. However, Schwandt (2003, p.305), cautions us to be mindful of the fact that this meaning is merely a snapshot in time as 'we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience'. One is regularly reminded of the participants place on the lifespan and their heightened levels of crises and commitment (Marcia 1980), as well as differing types and timespans of transitions (Tuohy and Cairns 2000). It was also paramount to note that the participants' belief in 'God or a higher power' could 'change from day to day' (Good and Willoughby 2006, p.52).

3.4.2 Social Constructionism and Appreciative Inquiry

Cooperider and Srivastva (1987) developed Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as rooted in a social constructionist theory. AI is a mode of collective inquiry and change capitalising on positive and generative potential thus maximising what is shown to work well and will continue to do so into the future. This rationale is put in place as opposed to sourcing change by focusing primarily on what is negative or deficient. The SFF programme enjoyed a level of positivity to date and so it was decided to take an AI stance as the mode of research.

AR and an LI inquiry with an AI stance implies an approach that is both an investigation and a collaborative action to improve the experience of all involved. This research employed an AI stance and not an AI methodology as in my capacity as an FDO, I noted that the 4D cycle 'Discover,

Dream, Design and Destiny' as outlined by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) is not ethically applicable or sensitive to an adolescent's religious faith stage. Kay and Francis (1996, p.32) hold that a decline in attitude towards Christian faith happens between the ages of eight and sixteen years: 'The drift from the Churches takes place not only by patterns of attendance but also within the minds and hearts of many young people'. Further, they found that development brings with it an introduction to adult experiences and values, hence the individual often becomes 'indifferent' (1996, p.31) to religion or as Creasy Dean (2010, p.24) suggests many young people adopt a 'benign whatever-ism' attitude to the Church. This echoes Smith and Denton (2005) who from the findings of their American study (referenced earlier and known as the NSYR) labelled the faith of American adolescents as a 'Moral Therapeutic Deism' (2005, p.171).

One may suggest that to invite sixteen-year-old participants to engage with the 'Dream stage' of the 4D AI process with regard to their religious faith would neither be particularly productive nor ethical. The adolescent participants in this research have opted-in to a peer-ministry religious faith-development programme in an effort to empower their personal search for meaning and values. Thus it is suggested that elements of the 4D process may prove assumptive on my part and overwhelming on theirs.

3.4.3 Generativity

As well as positivity, generativity is an equal part in AI (Bushe 2011). Generativity was first proposed by Gergen (1978) as that which transforms cultures and furnishes new pathways for social action. As well as Cooperider (1986), Bushe (2011, p.6) agrees that for AI to be successful it must be generative: 'Questions about conflict create more conflict. Questions about life giving properties of the organisation create more vitality'. Bushe (2011, p.11) asserts that positivity alone cannot sustain transformative change and adds that AI carries more potential for genuine success if 'the positive imagery and affect are used in the service of generativity'. All data collection instruments were rooted in the AI mode of research and so it was hoped that as the entire process, framed by a positive approach and built on past experience would work to promote generativity within the area of adolescent religious faith development:

Philosophical Underpinning Epistomology: Social Constructionism	Ontological Position: Creative Pragmatism
Methodology Action Research and Lasting Impact Inquiry	
Mode of Research Appreciative Inquiry: Generative AI	

Figure 4: Research Design (Walsh 2014)

3.5 The Role of the Researcher

Creswell (2009) suggests that researchers recognise 'that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation' (2009, p.8). My position in this research, therefore, arises out of my values and individual story. Creswell (2009) asserts that this transparency can only be supportive to the process. Mauthner (1997) and Trussell (2008) highlight that research with adolescents carries authority of age and inequalities of power that typically follow in the researcher-adolescent relationship. My role as researcher co-existed with my role as FDO and facilitator of the programme. I perceive myself as an insider-outsider researcher as I was FDO for the Spritan Trust body but not a member of the teaching staff in any of the Spiritan schools. Furthermore, a condition of the programme is the calling of participants and facilitator by their first names, thus one may suggest that a subtle shift in the power relationship occurred naturally.

The research findings are co-constructions emerging from the interactions between the participants and myself but presented only by myself. Creswell (2007, p.179) highlights the importance of the researcher being open to his or her role as he or she shapes 'the writing that emerges'. The timeframe for collecting all data is depicted in **Figure 5** below:

Year 1 - Part One A
AR Cycle 1 in fourth year of SFF Programme **Pre and Post-Programme Questionnaires** **Post-Programme Focus Group Interview x 1**
Year 2 - Part One B
AR Cycle 2 in fifth year of SFF Programme **Pre and Post-Programme Questionnaires** **Post-Programme Focus Group Interviews x 2**
Year 3 - Part Two A, B & C
Part Two A: Pilot LI Questionnaire for 5th and 6th Year Past-participants in One School **Part Two B: Edit LI Questionnaire: Proceed with Edited LI Questionnaire for 5th & 6th Year Past-participants in Two schools** **Part Two C: Interview Past-participants and Teachers from all Three schools**

Figure 5 Timeframe for Collecting Data (Walsh 2013/2015)

3.6 Action Research

The cyclical path of AR caused a critical reflection of the design, facilitation and evaluation of the SFF programme. This contributed to the programme that on the basis of prior informal evaluations has been positively received by participants. In agreement with Reason and Bradbury (2008), this AR study took place in order to achieve a new form of understanding in a practical way that may allow a 'flourishing' (2001, p.4). The flourishing that is of interest here is in terms of adolescent faith development. The connectedness that may have arisen in response to any sense of belonging and relatedness (Karcher and Lee 2002) experienced as a result of being part of the SFF community is also of interest. Participants may be connected in and through their efforts to explore/nourish their religious faith. They were offered a leadership role in faith development and engaged in peer ministry with 6th class pupils. The leadership and training sessions offered the participants a space to share and explore their individual religious worldview as well as re-engage with the catechesis of Confirmation. This allowed the participants an opportunity to lead the catechesis of Confirmation from a position of religious faith, at their own level (Tuohy and Cairns 2000). It also afforded participants a safe space to share their thoughts on the experience and how it did or did not impact their religious faith development and / or confidence and / or leadership. I placed myself as a 'second-person' (Reason and Bradbury 2008, p.6) action researcher as I inquired in person as well as through data collection instruments. At all times I appreciated a heightened sense of my own background and values and was keenly aware of my role as researcher and how that interacted with the shape (Creswell 2009) of the conclusions.

With two AR cycles, the process followed was taken from the Centre for Enhanced Learning and Teaching (CELT) as shown in **Figure 6** below:
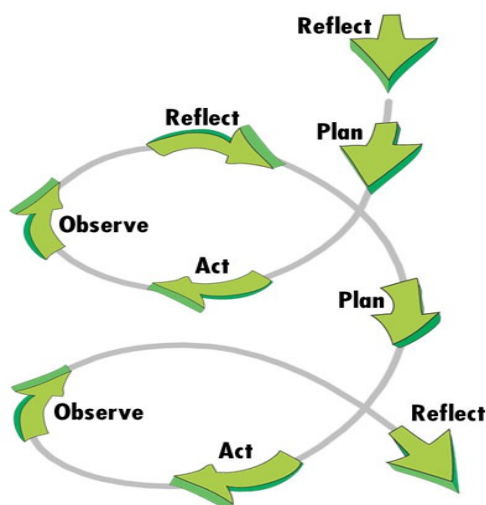
Figure 6 Action Research Cycle: Centre for Enhanced Learning and Teaching, 2013

3.6.1 Reflect

My role as FDO involved reflection on the faith development of adolescents. The literature coupled with my professional experience advised that TY was an optimal year for a religious faith based programme. In collaboration with the stakeholders, a faith development programme was authored and facilitated. It ran effectively for three years and became the focus of this study in its fourth year. One may suggest that it was timely to analyse and frame the programme within an AR study in an effort to learn how it impacted the participants (McNiff and Whitehead 2009). The research did not work to diagnose a problem, it engaged with an adolescent faith development programme within an AI and generative stance.

3.6.2 Plan: Part One

In light of Reason and Bradbury's (2008, p.4) suggestion that 'action research is participative research, and all participative research must be action research', I position myself as a participative action researcher. In collaboration with the gatekeepers (Grady *et al* 2014) the distribution of student packs for the fourth cycle of the SFF programme and first formal research cycle took place. It was at this point that I created the first data-collecting instrument (DCI).

3.6.3 Plan: Part Two

Given that the aim of qualitative research is to learn from participants, the research design is often 'emergent' (Creswell 2009, p.175). As a result of the first set of data analysis, the research design in this study was modified to make an additional inquiry. To further explore the possibility of a generative impact (Bushe 2011) from the programme, 5th and 6th Year past SFF participants were invited to complete a Lasting Impact (LI) questionnaire. In addition, it was proposed to hold individual interviews to pursue various themes and perspectives presented. In agreement with Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.31), this study worked to employ 'a wide range of interconnected interpretative methods,' as the researcher's ontology filtered the lens through which she guided and effected the final 'bricolage' (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, p.5).

3.6.4 Data-Collection Instruments: Part One

Following an extensive literature review, categories were formulated for a Pre- and Post-Programme questionnaire. Open questions were created in an effort to generate personal responses. Peterson (2000) describes questioning strategies in terms of structure and directness. The questions asked in this research were 'relatively structured' (2000, p.5) in an effort to support independent voices as well as to aid analysis. As this researcher promoted a trusting and open relationship

(Punch 2006; McNiff and Whitehead 2006) the questions gave full disclosure and were direct (Peterson 2000) in their focus.

Failure to pilot the pre-questionnaire in the first cycle led to the restructuring of the second pre-programme questionnaire. Although the categories remained the same, questions were further broken up to include 'fixed-response' (Patton 2002, p.353) answers. The Post-Programme DCI was not adapted for the second cycle as it yielded rich and informative data in the first cycle. Three FGIs were held and the data received was rich and varied.

The FGIs were carried out to discover consistent or diverse perspectives, to give confidence to the participants, to articulate their opinions and allow them to 'provide checks and balances on each other' (Patton 2002, p.386). Professional experience of the dynamics of adolescent group discussion and a resulting awareness of the fact that confidence to speak or share an opposing opinion may be inhibited, helped me 'moderate' (Krueger 1994, p.100) each FGI. Observational methods may have been a DCI option, however, my role as FDO between ten schools did not support this option due to time constraints as facilitation in schools took place during school hours. There was no available documentation on the programme thus such a method of data collection was not entertained.

3.6.5 Data Collection Instruments: Part Two

In Part Two of the research the DCI's were piloted in one school and modified for the other two schools. Results of all three schools are discussed in the findings chapter. Part Two questionnaires included 'relatively structured' (Peterson 2000, p.5) and 'fixed-response' (Patton 2002, p.353) questions. They were direct in their language and offered full disclosure. Arising from the responses, semi-structured interviews were offered to participants on an opt-in basis. The interview questions were formatted to lead to a 'standardised open-ended interview' (Patton 2003, p.342). Lambert *et al* (2013) agree when they suggest that asking open-ended questions allows one to go beyond 'limitations' (2013, p. 1419). Seven students and seven teachers opted to be interviewed and the questions remained the same in an effort to support analysis and standardise responses.

Given that not all participants had the same level of articulation and perception as well as there being a risk of 'bias responses' (Creswell 2003, p.187) due to my presence was a cause of concern in terms of this method of data collection. It was decided that the level of adolescent articulation may also be representative of the age group, thus presenting a distinct terminology, set of perceptions and insights. Perhaps participants who were candid and shared their truth reciprocated

my open and honest relationship. Patton (2002) cautions that 'the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer' (2002, p.341). It is suggested therefore that my teacher/facilitator role with adolescents for over two decades presented a skill base and a confidence with which to proceed. It is important to add that the AI mode of research in this study determined that all questions were affirmative and worked to focus on the positive and generative (Bushe 2011) elements of the programme.

3.6.6 Justification for DCIs

It is suggested that justification for the DCIs employed in this research is evident in the rich data gathered. In agreement with Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is necessary to collect many detailed and personal responses to comprehend the multiple realities of participants. This is especially true of this study in terms of the ages and stages of the adolescent participants as well as the faith development context of the study. Büssing *et al* (2010) hold that as an adolescent matures the ability to discuss religious faith/spirituality can be 'masked by a lack of adequate language' (2010, p.39). In an effort to combat this suggestion, all questionnaires used clear and consistent (with the RE examination syllabus and the SFF programme) language, as well as being available to complete at home in hard copy or online, with adequate space and time for responses.

3.6.7 Data Analysis and Coding

Creswell (2009) suggests a six-step process for analysis and interpretation of data.
This involves the following elements:

1. Organising;
2. Gaining a general sense of;
3. **Coding**;
4. Generating descriptions;
5. Representing;
6. Interpretation of the data.

Step three is highlighted as a step that requires abundant time and patience. Creswell (2009) maintains that coding is 'the process of organising the material into chunks or segments before bringing meaning to information' (2009, p.186). Further, Creswell (2009) advocates for Tesch's (1990) eight steps towards the coding process. Gathering the data and data analysis began as a

simultaneous procedure. Following this ongoing and reflective process meant that the data in this inquiry was tabulated, produced on hard copy and colour-coded by hand.

3.6.8 Categories

Although the traditional approach (Creswell 2009) is to allow coding categories to emerge, it was decided to use a conglomeration of coding categories directed by the:

- the theoretical lens
- the research questions and
- new categories that arose from the data

As the coding process progressed it was necessary to consistently reference and cross-reference between the research questions and the data to ensure that the emerging reconstructions remained relevant and informative for the lessons learned (Creswell 1998). This allowed various categories to be utilised as headings in the findings chapter. It is interesting to note that further coding categories emerged from the FCIs and individual interviews. Thus in agreement with Silverman (2007, p.147) 'interview interactions are inherently spaces in which both speakers are constantly doing analysis – both speakers are engaged (and collaborating) in making meaning and producing knowledge'. This doing of analysis was evident in the interview processes and the new codes that were established were integrated and interpreted by the researcher.

The coding process employed in this study confirmed as well as contended with parts of the literature. It explored surprise responses from participants (Creswell 2009) and garnered the AI stance of the programme. In agreement with Ludema and Fry (2008, p.281), a focus in the coding analysis was given to the 'root causes of success', where elements of the programme consistently supported a sense of adolescent connectedness and / or faith development.

As the interpretative narrative began it was decided to 'display multiple perspectives from individuals' making every effort to include 'diverse quotations and specific evidence' (Creswell 2009, p.189). It is hoped that this offers a systematic authenticity and objectivity to the interpretation. Further, it is hoped that the lessons learned (Creswell 1998) may support the formation of other adolescent FD programmes as well as more socially orientated peer-ministry programmes.

3.6.9 Act

The SFF programme was launched with information talks in each school. The participants were invited to 'opt-in' to the programme as authentic faith development is by invitation only and never by coercion. Following registration, the plain language statements (PLS) and letters of informed consent (LIC) were distributed to the participants. The first phase of the programme, which has eight religious faith development and leadership-training sessions with TY students, commenced at each location. Each student was given an SFF pack as well as a reflective journal. The previously circulated PLS and LIC were collected with almost all participants opting to take part in the research. At this point, the first DCI was distributed in hardcopy and the participants were invited to complete it at home. When collected the responses were entered into Google Documents for analysis.

In an effort to avoid social desirability otherwise named as response bias (Rezmovic 1977), or response distortion (Potosky and Bobko 1997), Richmen *et al* (1999, p.755) hold that participants 'using a computer as compared with traditional instruments may feel anonymous, private, or free of social pressure … and hence may be less prone to give socially desirable answers (or more prone to be candid)'. In response to this theory and in an effort to support the adolescents as they attempted to articulate their truth about programme impact, it was decided to offer future questionnaires online.

Upon completion of the programme, the participants were invited to fill out a second questionnaire hosted by Google documents. This meant that responses were collated and available for immediate analysis. Finally, a Focus Group Interview (FGI) took place in one school during the first cycle and in two schools during the second.

3.6.10 Observe

When AI is successful, it 'generates spontaneous, unsupervised, individual, group and organisational action towards a better future' (Bushe 2007, p.30). As part of the overall exploration of the programme, it was planned to inquire about the generative impact. This was in keeping with the teachings of the Church on education. 'Vision '08' states that 'Catholic schools are part of the Church's continuing mission to carry the life-giving message of Christ to every generation' (2008, p.3). As noted above, the emergent research design invited past-participants to complete an online LI questionnaire that was qualitatively analysed as well as an unstructured interview schedule that emerged from the LI responses.

Given that a relationship developed between the facilitator/researcher and the participants (Creswell 1994, 2009), it was suggested that the AR and the LI inquiry, together with the subsequent data gathering methods, dovetailed the division between academic research and practical theory. The roles of facilitator/researcher interconnected and interrelated throughout the process. I hoped to be considered an instrument of research (Punch 1994; Denzin and Lincoln 2003; Creswell 2007) in addition to the person responsible for data collection and analysis. As is part of the AR cycle, the data from the first cycle, was reflected upon for its capacity to modify and reconstruct the following cycle.

3.7 Reliability, Validity and Triangulation

Silverman (2000, p.175) asserts that there is no point in embarking on a research project 'unless you can show your audience the procedures you used to ensure that your methods were reliable and your conclusions valid'. He continues by offering two straightforward definitions from Hammersley (1990) that couples reliability with consistency of methods, and validity with truth. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to the 'trustworthiness' or 'authenticity' of a piece of research. As noted earlier, the generatively of this study is of interest to all stakeholders thus to authentically promote faith development together with adolescent connectedness, building for future generations in the Christian faith community, is the bedrock of this study. Interestingly Stenbacka, (2001) disagrees with creating a criteria of reliability in qualitative study by stating that, 'If a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good' (2001, p.552). However, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.300) use 'dependability', to describe reliability in qualitative research which is akin to the concept of reliability in quantitative research. Golafshani (2003, p.601) contends that to 'ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is crucial'.

In view of my experience in this research, I express agreement with Lincoln and Guba (1985) as well as Noble and Smith (2015) who hold that validity and reliability appear as co-dependent within the qualitative research process. Patton (2002) agrees when he adds that reliability is a consequence of validity. Creswell (1994) encourages the researcher to address the issue of reliability and validity openly within the study. With this in mind, I worked to employ consistency with each DCI, openness and transparency about my values, context and culture, and truth when the findings were presented. Given the content and backdrop to this study, reliability and truth are the pillars upon which it ought to stand.

According to Golafshani (2003), triangulation is a strategy that works to improve the validity and reliability of qualitative research. It is referenced by Creswell (1994) as that which finds 'convergence among sources of information … or different methods of data collection' (1994, p.158). Triangulation will occur between student data, teacher-interview data and the theoretical lens presented in a concerted effort to support the validity and reliability of the present research.

3.8 Research Participants

Probability and non-probability are two broad categories of sampling strategy. In qualitative research, non-probability sampling such as purposive sampling is widely used. However, due to the nature of this AR, sampling is not an issue and access to the small and bounded population is relatively straightforward. All students who registered for the SFF programme were invited to take part in the research. Participants were invited to engage with questionnaires (later online) and to take part in FGIs. The participants numbered between forty-seven and sixty-one each year. The second strand of the process invited past-participants to take part in an LI inquiry. They numbered approximately one hundred and twenty students with the majority being supportive of the research. An open invitation called past-participants and teachers to be interviewed as a further exploration of the LI and generative impact.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Mason (2002) and Creswell (2009) assert that ethical considerations in research are much more than following a set of guidelines provided by professional associations. This echoes Punch (2006) who advocates establishing a trust relationship between researcher and participants. In addition, Creswell (2009) advises that anticipating ethical issues in all stages of research is crucial. This point is significant in view of my ontological perspective which is in agreement with McNiff and Whitehead (2006, p.19) who assert that practitioners should openly espouse their values thereby enabling the research to emerge as 'living in the direction' of their values. Schön's (1983) model of reflective practice involving refection on and in action, and later expanded by Killion and Todnem (1991) to include reflection for action, is an effective support for any researcher as he/she works from a position of living values.

The ethical considerations in this research are heightened due to the age group of the participants and the context of the nature of the research that is often perceived as being private. Trussell (2008) discusses how research has evolved in terms of being with adolescents instead of on adolescents. He

suggests that this 'paradigm shift conceptualises youth as active and competent participants in the research process who are capable of speaking for themselves and shedding light on their own lives' (Trussell 2008, p.163). This shift is in agreement with the researcher's own view that adolescents ought to be invited to dialogue about faith, as they historically have had little or no voice (Engebretson 2007; Kay and Francis 1996; Kenny 2003). Further, Trussell (2008) describes five areas of ethical consideration specifically for research with adolescents:

> Power: bridging the adult-youth age gap;
>
> Negotiating the relationship triad: researcher, youth, and parent;
>
> Informed consent and assent: empowering youth with the choice to participate;
>
> Non-oppressive research: implications for design, interpretation, and dissemination;
>
> Researcher reflexivity: locating our own adolescent experiences in the research process (Trussell 2008, p.163).

These criteria informed the ethical process of this research. They were complied with through an honest and respectful relationship with participants and their parents, an opt-in invitation, online questionnaires ensuring privacy and my decades of experience as teacher/facilitator with post-primary students. Following approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Dublin City University, IRB approved letters of consent and plain language statements with the right to confidentiality, anonymity and exit from the research at any time assured to all participants. (Please see Appendix 1 to view the ethics approval, letter of consent and plain language statement). I approached the field with utmost respect for adolescents who opted-in to have their voice heard in an authentic faith development dialogue.

Each participant was aware that the programme was open to them whether or not they chose to take part in the research. Furthermore, it is fundamental to the teaching of the Catholic Church that one's 'response to God by faith must be free, and. . . therefore nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will. The act of faith is of its very nature a free act' (CCC 160).

Proactivity (Creswell 2009), together with informed reflective practice (Schön 1983) and adherence to professional guidelines as well as to Trussell's (2008) criteria meant an openness and reciprocity developed with the participants. As the research design emerged and was modified (Creswell 2009) the same procedures were met and an ongoing relationship of openness and trust was maintained.

3.10 Conclusion

In this evaluative study, the term connectedness differs to the term belonging and relatedness, (Karcher and Lee 2002). The connectedness emerges from a sense of belonging and relatedness. This definition was chosen as it is in keeping with the bedrock of Christianity where the Gospel of Mark (16:15) teaches, faith is received as well as given (CCC 166). It is hoped that the invitation to be actively involved in a leadership-training and peer-ministry programme within a religious faith development construct will enhance the male adolescent participants' search for meaning and values and their desire 'for some sort of authentic living' (Whitehead and McNiff 2000, p.59). In agreement with Schank (1995) and Hendrick (2011), it is in the doing, that one experiences the heartbeat of a theory. This study and its research design was constructed in the doing. In agreement with Crotty (2004) each piece of research is unique and so calls for a 'unique methodology' (2004, p.14) The methodology emerged (Creswell 2009) as opposed to having been chosen. This was deemed an effective means of evaluating the programme given that an AI stance with generativity (Gergen 1978, Bushe 2011) is of particular interest within the Christian context of the programme (CCC 166).

The desire to support and enable adolescents as they work to become more resilient within a faith-development context is at the heart of this study and advocates for my own living values (McNiff and Whitehead 2009). The research design is mapped in an effort to maximise the findings and for them to be transferrable. This may allow other adolescents to 'flourish' (Reason and Bradbury 2008) as religious faith development programmes act as a scaffolding for their journey through adolescence in an effort to help them realise their full human potential (John 10:10).

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

Evaluating Action: Part One
Pre and Post-Programme Questionnaires from the Action Research Cycles

4.0 Introduction

The data analysis for this study falls into two categories. **Part One** is a formal analysis of a fourth and fifth cycle of the Spiritan Faith Friends programme (SFF) that is part of an Action Research (AR) study. **Part Two** is a Lasting Impact (LI) inquiry that explores the lasting impact of the programme, if any, on the participants one and two years removed from it.

It was decided to report on and to analyse the findings simultaneously as this best represents the living theory that emerged from the entire process. The analysis will begin by exploring data from the AR cycles; responses from the Pre- and Post-Programme questionnaires followed by each of the Focus Group Interviews (FGIs). For the purpose of this research, the first cycle is referred to as Year 4 (Y4) and the participants from Y4 are coded with the letter X. The second cycle is referred to as Year 5 (Y5) and the participants are coded with the letter Y. The table below illustrates the level of participation and raw data involved in **Part One** of this inquiry:

Category	Students Year 4 (X)	Students Year 5 (Y)
Invitations to take part in Research	62	56
Acceptances with signed letter of Informed Consent	61	54
Pre Questionnaire	61	49
Post Programme Questionnaire	46	49
Focus Group Interviews	1	2

Figure 7 Table 1

4.1 Questionnaires

In Y4, sixty-one participants filled in the Pre-Programme Questionnaire (PQ), sixty-two participated in the programme and forty-six completed the Post-Programme Questionnaire (PPQ). In Y5, although there were forty-nine completed PQ's, fifty-six participants took part in the

programme and forty-three out of the original forty-nine completed the PPQ. This meant that in Y5 there were six participants who completed the PQ, participated in the programme and did not fill in the PPQ, as well as six participants who completed the programme and the PPQ but who did not complete the first questionnaire. Over the two years of the programme with one hundred and fifteen research participants, there were eighty-three who had a Pre-and-Post-Programme questionnaire, forty in Y4, and forty-three in Y5. The open coding for both years was directed by the theoretical framework and research questions. The programme deals with themes such as the importance of faith, the language of faith, roles in the Church, a sense of belonging in one's faith community and suggestions for future practice in FD programmes with adolescents.

4.2 First Layer of Coding: The importance of Faith

Creswell (2003) maintains that coding is 'the process of organising the material into chunks or segments before bringing meaning to information' (2003, p.192). In this research gathering the data and data analysis began as a simultaneous procedure. In Y4 the PQ consisted of eight questions. The first question asked the participants if faith was an important part of their lives. Out of the sixty-one responses, fifty-two students felt that faith had a level of importance ranging from relatively important to extremely important. Kenny (2003) cautions that the language of faith can cause a vast array of meaning to arise while Büssing *et al* (2010) add that as an adolescent matures, the ability to discuss religious faith/spirituality can be 'masked by a lack of adequate language' (2010, p.39).

Having coded the Y4 responses in the PQ and taking the findings from Büssing *et al* (2010) into consideration, I restructured the language and the format of many questions in the PQ for the second cycle (Y5). It was hoped that this would give rise to an even more rigorous exploration of each participant's encounter with faith. (Please see Appendix 2 and 3 to view the PQ questions from Y1 and Y2). The questions included 'relatively structured' (Peterson 2000, p.5) and 'fixed-response' (Patton 2002, p.353) questions. They were direct in their language and offered full disclosure. For example, the first question was changed from:

1.   Is faith an important part of your life? Please explain your answer
 to:
1.   In your opinion, what does the word 'faith' mean to you?
2.   In agreement with the above understanding of the word 'faith', is faith an important part of your life?

2a.　　Please explain your answer to the previous question.

The PQ questions in Y5 gave consideration to each participant's personal understanding of the word 'faith'. The level of importance attributed to faith was defined in the 'fixed-response' (Patton 2002, p.353) drop down menu. The participants were invited to document further their response in Q2a. This yielded a larger amount of data and it was hoped a more accurate description of the understanding and sense of faith encountered by each participant. If 'faith' was defined by the participants themselves they could better appreciate its meaning and describe its presence or absence in their lives.

When answering Q1, there were twenty-one references to 'God', seven references to 'Jesus' and / or 'Christian', twenty-six references to 'trust' in 'God' or 'someone or something', and twenty-four references to 'belief' either in 'someone' or 'something', as well as 'belief in someone or something greater than us'. Faith was defined as 'strength of our relationship with God' or 'special trust'. Significantly, some named faith as how one lives one's life, echoing Harris and Moran (1998), thus they described faith as an outward action, a 'practice' or the living out of one's 'belief'. **Figure 8** below offers a selection of responses as follows:

Students from Y5	Answer
Y22	Faith is a separate thing to what you believe in, it is **how** you believe it. It is a person's personal relationship with God and it can be strengthened or weakened based on how we to **live** our lives…
Y28	Faith means to believe in something and putting that belief in **practice.**
Y30	Faith to me means my religion because it influences **everything I do** from day to day.
Y16	It means to me that you believe in god and live an **active Christian life.**
Y13	Faith means to me what you believe in, but a**lso how you show it, and if you are confident enough to portray it.**

Figure 8 Q1 - Y5

4.2.1 Pre-Programme Questionnaire: Question 2

As noted above, in Y5 the first question invited each participant to tick a box with respect to the part faith played in his life. Some participants doubled up on their answers, ticking 'Yes an important part', as well as 'Yes but only a small part'. A total of twenty-three participants agreed that faith was an 'important part' of their lives and three stated that faith was 'huge' in their lives. One participant noted that without faith he would have 'a certain lack of identity' (Y5). Curiously, twenty-one participants ticked the box that named faith as important '… but only a small part' of their lives. This and the fact that many seemed quite clear in their responses that either faith played an important part in life or faith is important but played a small part in life, may indicate that the new set of questions and drop down menu in Y5 were a more accurate way of enquiring about the participants' thoughts on their religious faith (Lane 1993, 2003). **Figure 9** below offers a snapshot of Y4's and Y5's responses to the question on the importance of faith and the language they employed to describe it:
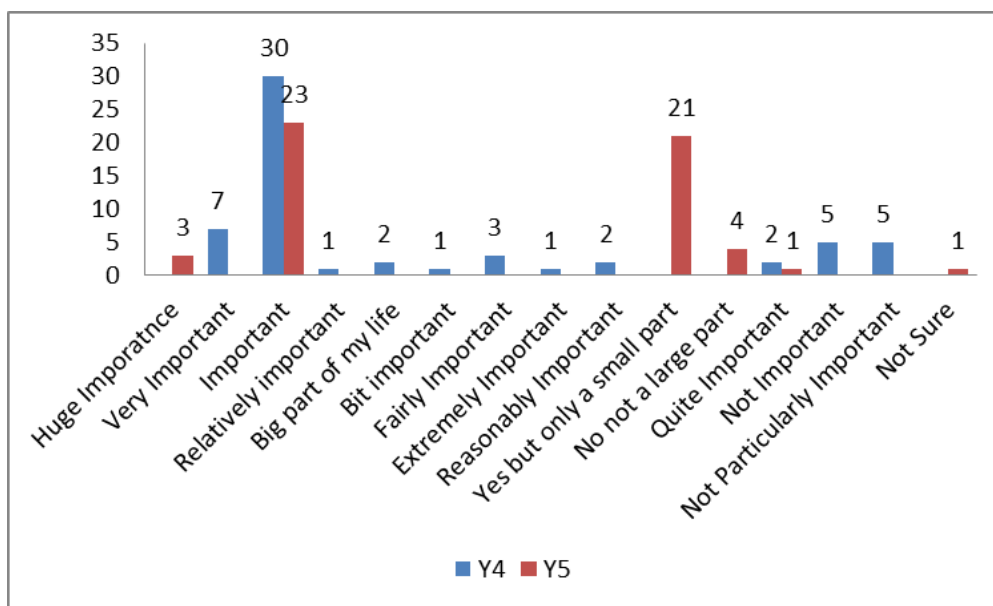
Figure 9 Table 2

As Y5 were invited to explain their answers, some participants described faith qualitatively, as an implicit part of their lives, while others grappled with faith on a quantitative basis citing the amount of time it involved in their lives. There were many participants who stated that faith played a definite role in their lives, adding that the busyness of life did not allow faith to flourish. Rationale for this included the 'modern lifestyle' (Y35) and how it was 'hard because of all the distraction in this world', (Y1). Another student agreed that faith was important but that he didn't 'have a lot of free time' (Y44).

This indicates that for some adolescent males, an understanding of faith may be bound to a set of beliefs alone as opposed to being a set of beliefs empowered by a personal act of faith (Lane 2003). Faith was often deemed another 'thing' to be done, as opposed to a way of living one's life (Harris and Moran 1998). This suggests that there may be an uneasy tension between some participants' personal act of faith as well as their public act of faith.

In Y4, there were five participants who felt that faith had 'no importance' in their lives and a further five who felt faith was important but 'not particularly important'. In Y5 the 'No not at all' box remained unticked, four choose the 'No not a large part' option and one ticked the 'Not sure' box. It is interesting to explore some of these responses:

Student	Further Response
X1:	'I think that there is a god somewhere but he's unique to everyone and that you can't make this 1 religion that everyone is ment to abide by.'
X0:	'Faith is not an important part of my life, however I'm not an atheist, nor am I an agnostic.'
Y35: 'No not a large part'	'Modern lifestyle has made people less interested in their faith to such an extent that it is no longer a large part in their life.'
Y38: 'No not a large part'	'I attend church, but not regularly, I have a belief in God but to not practice that belief as much as others'.

Figure 10 Q1 Pre-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

It appears that some of these participants were not completely satisfied with the level of faith in their lives. One participant came across as unsure about faith (X0), while others seemed to doubt their faith. The concept of being called into community to 'love one another' (John 13:34) is the essence of Christianity, as in the words of Harris and Moran (1998, p.109) 'to be is to be with', yet for many participants faith was described as a bolt-on to their lives, thus an imbalance became evident between an active faith and an inactive set of beliefs. For others, while faith was not particularly important, it had value at some level:

Student	1. Is faith an important part of your life? Please explain your answer.
X22:	'At the moment, it is reasonably important. I grew up as part of a very holy family. ... Attending mass every weekend is something which I always have done. Recently however, I have begun to **question** my faith as science comes to the fore, an as I have entered adolesence.'
X18:	'not particularly, although I like to think I am religious. I believe faith is for less important in this day and age.'
Y5 - Q2. In agreement with the above understanding of the word 'faith', is faith an important part of your life?	
Y28:	'**I would like to practice my faith more** but sometimes it is hard but I hope that as I get older I will begin to practice it more'
Y32:	'i regularly go to mass **but feel that i don't practice my faith as much as i like** outside of mass but i feel that this programme is perfect for the **development of my faith.i would like my faith to play a larger part in my life from now on**.'

Figure 11 Q1 Pre-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

Participant X22 stated that he came from 'a very holy family' and referenced consistent Mass attendance. He questioned faith and related this to science and adolescence. Participant X18 felt that he was a 'religious' person but did not relate faith as having a high importance. The Y5 participants above seemed to display a deeper hunger for faith. However, it is necessary to state that these are not a random group of students but rather a community of adolescent males who opted-in to an FD programme that was already established in their school. They decided to take part and this in itself may signal a maturity and / or movement in Fowler's (1981) FDT. In addition, the questionnaire responses showed that participants from both cycles made an effort to articulate their awareness of personal faith development, echoing SGN (2010) and Fowler (1981) that reference a specific age group who display a readiness for growth in faith. It may be suggested that the participants' choice of language flagged an individual search for meaning and values within a community [of faith].

Sample data as per **Figure 11** above may serve to sharpen the focus on adolescent age-and-stage appropriate FD programmes as it seems to signal adolescence as a critical time where there can be a 'drift' from the communal and institutional practice of faith (Kay and Francis 1998; Engebretson

2007; Creasy Dean 2010) or a commitment to the personal search for meaning within a shared setting of a faith community (SGN 2010).

4.3 Second layer of Coding: Faith and Doubt

The above 'searching' observation suggested a second layer of coding labelled 'Faith and Doubt'. This meant grouping specific references to the questioning of faith. Lane (1993, 2003) and Migliore (2004) emphasise that to continue to ask questions is the premise of authentic faith development. It might be suggested that having the courage and the creativity to formulate new questions ought to empower the authenticity of any faith. Lane (2003, p.45) holds that in 'faith formation there is always room for engagement with the questions, doubts and unbeliefs.'

Student	1. Is faith an important part of your life? Please explain your answer.
X9	'I have doubts to whether God is real ...,',
X4	'by lack of time to talk to God and also the newly introduced 'Is God Real' question.',
X8	'Faith is not really important in my life but my family and I go to mass and it is important to them and it is important to me on some levels and sometimes I don't know what to believe.'

Figure 12 Q1 Pre-Programme Questionnaire Y4

It is interesting to note that doubt was referenced early in response to Q1 on faith in Y4's PQ as seen in **Figure 12** above, but presented later in the series of responses about spirituality in Y5. Question 5 (Y5) enquired '**In your opinion do you have a spirituality or a sense of spirituality?**' Some participants ticked more than one box and this is detailed on the left of the chart in **Figure 13** It is interesting to note that no student chose the 'No' box. This may echo Engebretson's (2007, p.26) moral purpose for opting to conduct her research with male adolescents alone as she suggests that 'Boys need education for spirituality'. By drawing on Kindlon's and Thompson's (1999) exposition of the biblical story of Cain, Engebretson (2007, p.26) urges that boys need to be able to 'draw upon their inner resources, emotional awareness, empathy and moral courage' to build their resilience and inner strength.
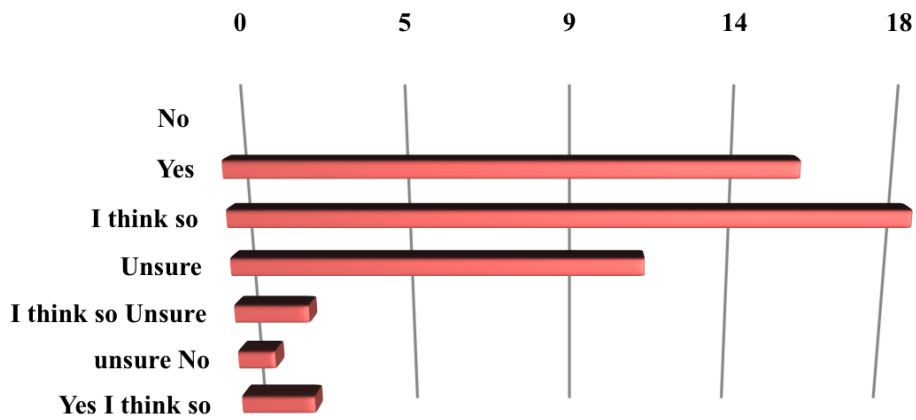
Q5. Do you have a spirituality or a sense of a spirituality?
Figure 13 Pre-Programe Questionnaire Y5

It is necessary to add that non-healthy doubts did arise for some participants who questioned if retribution for some previous experience was being sought by God:

> I question my faith as I wonder why things happen to me? And wonder if I have done anything to deserve this (Y49).

This tone, although expressed by few, was present in the data. It may be suggested that faith and doubt were evidently present in this adolescent's life as he tried to deal with his personal struggles. It is unfortunate that his doubt was a negative doubt. However, the fact that this participant opted-in to the programme suggested that he was open to the support a faith community may offer him. It can only be hoped that his participation afforded him some level of encouragement in his search for meaning.

Further, in response to the question on spirituality, a third of the participants felt that they had a spirituality and offered assured responses, while another third articulated doubts. This may also echo Flynn's (2005, p.116) analysis of Congar's (2005, p.115) 'threshold Church', where many young people see themselves on the perimeter of the Church with little knowledge of their place within the institutional Church. In agreement with Engebretson (2007) the doubts that were presented in this research agree with the theory that adolescents, males in particular, benefit from education in faith and spirituality. With respect to research (Büssing *et al* 2010; Shaheen 2014), that found spirituality a protective factor for youth to combat depression, self-harm and suicidal tendencies, it must be more. Harris and Moran (1996, p.109) suggest that developing a spiritual and holistic self is at the core of education in faith, and 'rootless' if not established out of a religious tradition.

4.3.1 Extremely Important

This leads us to specific Y4 data where two students held that faith was 'extremely important' to them. Participant X6 used this specific language and participant X48 spoke of the fact that faith was his life, thus putting him in this category. A closer look at participant X6 shows us that there are adolescents who strongly articulate and live life confidently from a mature position of faith:

Student	Answer
X6	'i would consider faith to be an extremely important part of my life and it always has been.'.

Figure 14 Q1 Pre-Programme Questionnaire Y4

Participant X6 followed the above statement by naming the roles he had previously held in the Church: 'altar boy' and 'youth reader'. He continued by adding that he has 'a very personal relationship with God and therefore faith is very important to me.' This echoed his opening line. Thus his understanding of a role within the Church is not limited to clerical roles but emerged out of his own story. Of importance to this student was the opportunity to articulate his level of faith and how it flourished within a relational sphere. When asked in the PPQ what participants would like to see in terms of improving the programme, participant X6 requested more time for the TYs to discuss their faith together:

Student	Answer
X6	'if anything I would like to see a bit more of actually discussing each other's faith with each other as a ty group, but even that would only be an after thought as I really enjoyed faith friends in general.'

Figure 15 Q8 Post-Programme Questionnaire

Could this data illustrate a developing spirituality that signals an adolescent beginning to transition to and to cultivate an owned faith (Fowler 1981)? Participant X6 wished to share his thoughts in what he deemed a safe environment. It is necessary to note that out of the many hundreds of students who took part in the programme and the one hundred plus whose data was formally evaluated, a single student in both, formally evaluated AR cycles requested additional opportunities to discuss faith with their peers. It was in the LI inquiry that this request was explored further.

It could be suggested that the two particular participants referenced above were at a more advanced stage of faith than their peers. Others were perhaps less equipped with the confidence and faith language of these two participants suggesting support for Engebretson (2007), Kay and Francis (1996) and Kenny (2003) who state that adolescent males are excluded from the dialogue of faith, as the language of the Gospel is in its essence feminine and appears to be lacking in the masculine traits sought after and applauded in adolescent males (Santrock 2001; Steinberg 2002). The constructionist approach I adopted led me to respond to such data by allocating more discussion and sharing time within the training sessions. This may in turn have influenced Lasting Impact interview data where participants stated that the sharing and discussion of faith greatly augmented their confidence to discuss faith and to articulate the process of faith development itself.

4.4 Third Layer of Coding: The Language of Faith

The third layer of coding explored the language of faith used by the participants. Sunday 'Mass' was consistently referenced by participants as they struggled with the language to describe their faith. Out of the 61 participants in Y4, twenty-one referenced a regular attendance at Mass and seemed to offer this as proof of their faith. For example, one participant stated that faith played a 'key role' in his life, yet articulated only liturgical roles, a second stated that he had 'always' gone to Mass. It may be suggested that some participants were still firmly rooted in the concrete operational stage of faith (Fowler 1981). Other participants attended Mass yet did not feel it was relevant to their lives. One participant said he went along to Mass as part of the family and another found that although he attended Mass he did not 'connect fully with God'. In Y4 and in small numbers in Y5, some responses offered 'Mass' as a one-size-fits-all for any type of prayer time, a way to determine whether one has faith or a way of describing a sacramental celebration.

Thus as per the literature, the language of faith was struggled with in adolescence especially by male adolescents. However this study hopes to show that adequate time and support for the articulation of faith is an opportunity that can be graciously accepted and built upon by teenagers.

4.5 Fourth Layer of Coding: Extra-Ordinary Perspectives on Faith

A fourth layer of coding examined the various perspectives on faith. From the adolescent who did not know what to believe, to those who cited an extra-ordinary grasp on faith. While responses like those displayed below in **Figure 16** were in the minority, they did present informally in all cycles and formally in the AR cycles of Y4 and Y5:

Student	1. Is faith an important part of your life? Please explain your answer.
X48	Faith is my life or so it should be. I have undertaken to devote my life, my strength, my heart, my mind and my soul to my God and saviour. There is still a struggle before I do. I will take faith before food or sleep. My faith is my final solution to all problems. My faith is my rest when I tire. I try everyday and always to love God and my fellow man.
Student	2. In agreement with the above understanding of the word 'faith', is faith an important part of your life?
Y30	I go to mass every Sunday. I say my prayers every night. I try to say the rosary whenever I can. I love talking to God, Jesus and Mary, especially my guardian angel.

Figure 16 Q1 Pre-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

In contrast to student X6 from Y4 who may wish to own a personal faith and voiced the opportunity to discuss this with his peers, the above participants articulated a faith that came across as post searching. One is respectfully reminded of Migliore (2004) who notes that the authenticity of faith is captured in faith seeking understanding; 'Faith in God, revealed in Jesus Christ sets an inquiry in motion, fights the inclination to accept things as they are and continually calls in question unexamined assumptions about God, our world and ourselves' (2004, p.4). Further, exploration of the above students' answers may flag an element of superiority in that the participants in question are somehow alone in their possession of a doctrine and / or a grasp of faith among their peers, for example:

Student	Response to Questions 7. and 8.
X48 **What do you think you can bring to the Spiritan Faith Friends Programme?**	I can bring my faith and I can bring the product of my thoughts and experience. I can have a serenity and a way of thinking which **I believe that people benefit from**.
X48 **Why do you think you registered to take part in a faith programme like this one?**	I believe that preserving, teaching and explaining our faith **will sanctify others** and myself to eternal joy and life in Christ.
Y30 **Why do you think you registered to take part in a faith programme like this one?**	I want to be able to say that I guided the 6th class boys in making their confirmation. To feel really good to see them on the day. So that they can be a **better Catholic when they grow up.**
Y30 **Do you have any hopes in terms of your own faith and this programme?**	Most people in my year do not go to mass or talk to God and I feel that I have to share my faith with them because it is our job to do it as Catholics, to preach the word of God to the **lost sheep.**

Figure 17 Pre-Programme QuestionnaireY4 and Y5

The above articulation of faith opens up many other areas that cannot be adequately explored in this study, however, it is worthy of note that some adolescents, albeit a small minority, articulate their faith in this way.

There was much information garnered from the participants in response to the first questionnaires from both cycles. Due to word restrictions it is impossible to explore every theme found. However, the selected findings do make significant points and provide an essential foundation to this study as well as some insight for further professional practice.

Post-Programme Questionnaire

4.6 Introduction

At the completion of the programme, the participants were invited to answer a Post-Programme Questionnaire (PPQ). I decided not to alter the PPQ for Y5 as it had yielded rich data in Y4. In an effort to decrease social desirability, the PPQs were available online. In Y4, forty-six participants responded to the PPQ and in Y5, forty-nine participants responded. In both cycles there were participants with completed PQ's and no corresponding PPQ, and others with completed PPQ's with no corresponding PQ. (Please see Appendix 4 to view the PPQ questions for Y4 and Y5). **Figures 18** and **19** below details an example of quantitative data from the AR questionnaires in both cycles:

Pre-Programme Questionnaire Y4

Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4
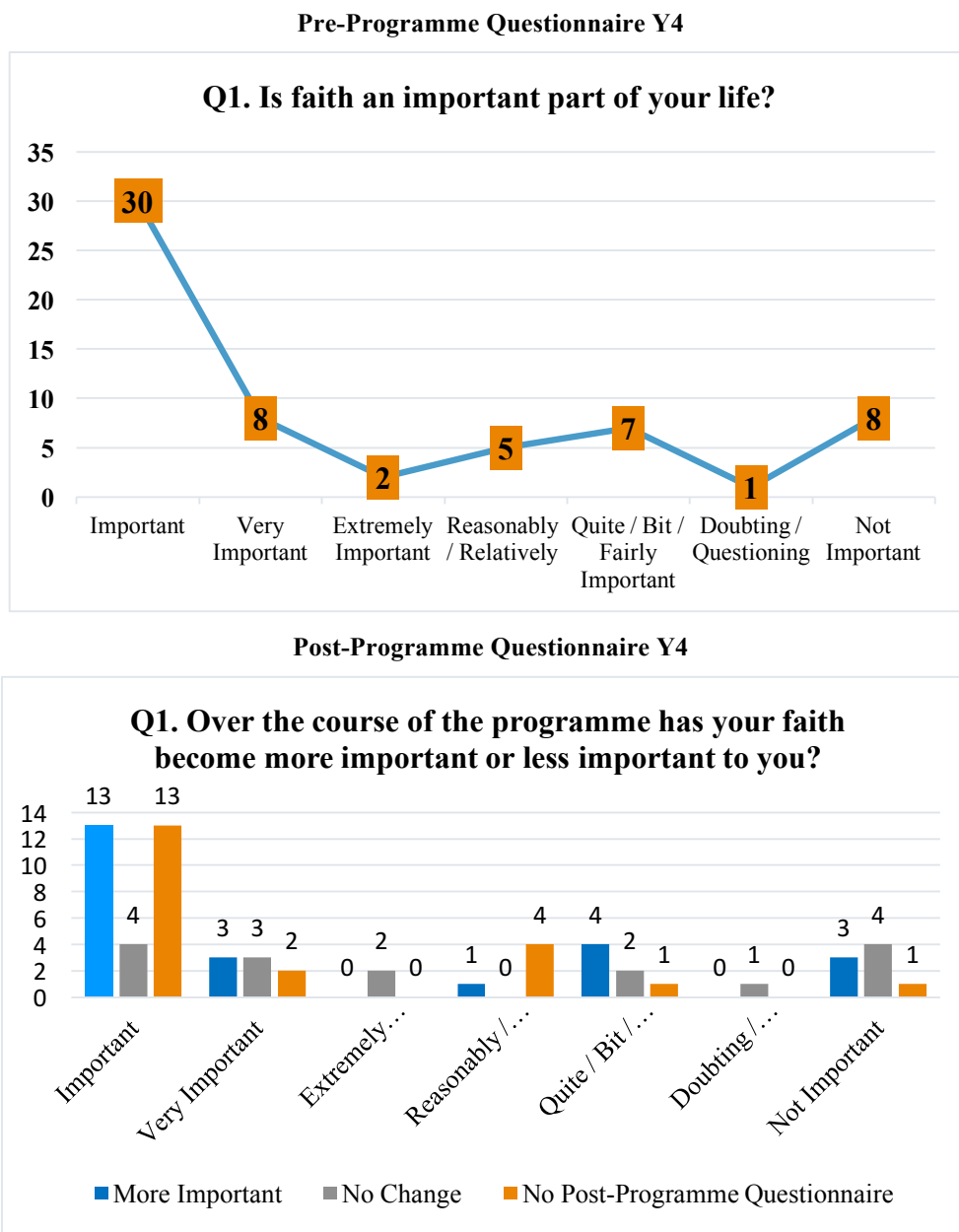
Figure 18 Table 3a and 3b

In the course of the two years encapsulating one hundred and fifteen research participants, there were eighty-three sets of corresponding responses, forty in Y4 and forty-three in Y5. It is interesting to note that in the Y4 PQ, fifty-two out of the sixty-one participants felt that their faith had a degree of importance in their lives. Out of those fifty-two participants, thirty-two had corresponding PPQs, with twenty-one (65%) stating that their faith had become more important. Further, out of eight participants who felt that their faith was not important, three out of the seven (43%) who had completed the PPQ, agreed that their faith had become more important since participating in the programme. In Y5 the data shows similar results to Y4. Out of the forty-four participants who noted faith as important on some level, thirty-thee of the forty-three who had corresponding questionnaires (75%), felt that their faith had become more important. Out of the four who did not feel that faith was important, two participated in the PPQ and one noted that his faith had become more important. Out of the ninety-six participants across the two cycles who felt that Pre-Programme their faith was important (at some level), eighty-four had corresponding questionnaires. Fifty-four (63.5%) of these stated that participation in the programme had caused their faith to become more important. Furthermore, of the twelve who felt that faith was not important, nine had corresponding questionnaires with four (75%), stating that the programme had caused their faith to become more important.

Pre-Programme Questionnaire Y5

Q2. In agreement with the above understanding of the word 'faith', is faith an important part of your life?

Post-Programme Questionnaire Y5

Q1. Over the course of the programme has your faith become more important or less important to you?
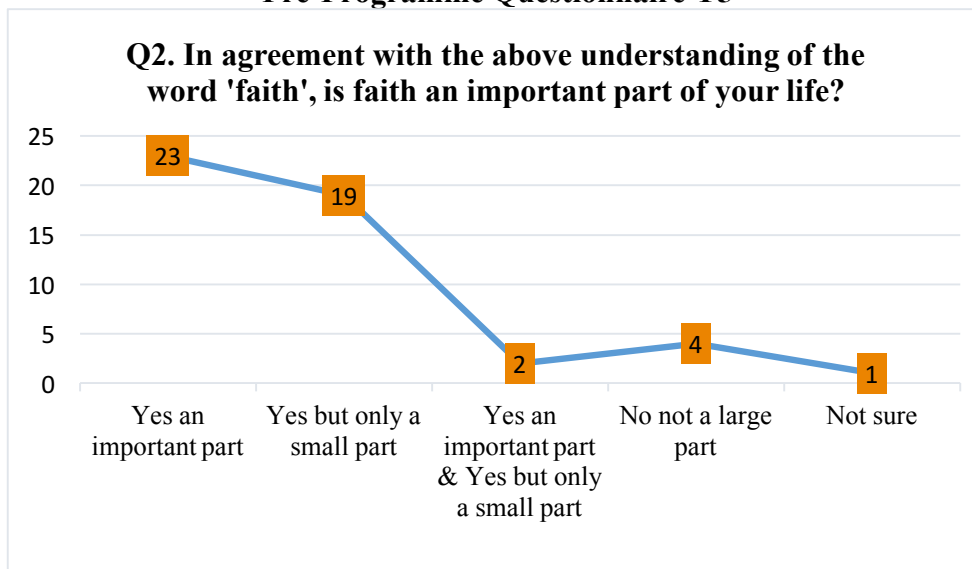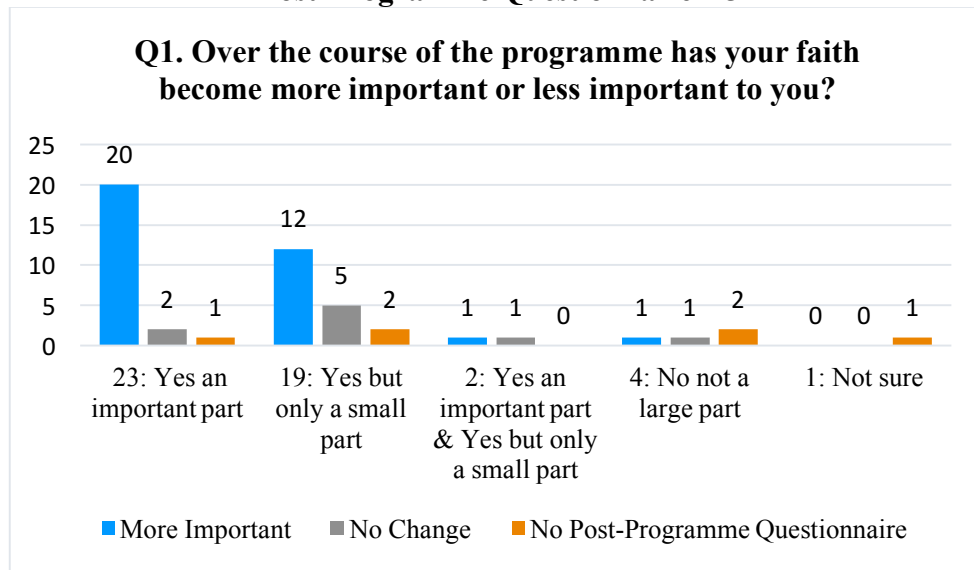
Figure 19 Table 4a and 4b

This information suggests that the SFF programme is an effective intervention in terms of faith development or at the very least; it has enabled the adolescent participants to feel more open and aware of their faith. While it is acknowledged that the level of faith and faith development for all participants was not equal, the data is informative for FD programme creators. At a very preliminary level perhaps the SFF programme is an opportune way to explore which adolescents in any Transition Year wish to explore faith in a structured way.

One may suggest that it is helpful to explore the rationale behind some of the 'faith is more important' participant responses:

Student Y4	Q1a. Please try to explain your answer
X21	Seeing the young men answers really *made me think about my faith. I realized a lot more about myself than before*.
X0	I've realised that *values such as courage, or knowledge in Christian terms are a parts of everyday life that i aspire to have*.
X20	I feel that *I have become more connected to my beliefs and how I bring them into my life.*
X19	*it made me think more about my faith and strengthened it.*
Student Y5	Q1a. Please try to explain your answer
Y52	The reason I think my faith is more important because I have helped others with their *religious journey.*
Y12	Because we talked about our relationship with God with the children and I *felt my connection strenghten* with God and the boys.
Y2	Because I have talked about it more I feel like it is a bigger part of my life. It has helped me *get back in touch with my faith after walking away for a while.*
Y22	The course was aimed at bringing one's faith into focus, and watching the 6th form guys work on it and develop gave me a *new found appreciation for my faith.*

Figure 20 Q1a Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

In the selection of Y5 responses above, the language is clear, expressive and suggests a change in the adolescents' understanding and appreciation of their faith. These responses do not suggest a desire to impress. These responses may be viewed as examples of maturing reflections on searching religious faiths. As the programme revolves around reciprocal relationships, it may be suggested that the information above agrees with Tuohy and Cairns (2000) who hold that a participative experience is required for adolescent faith to flourish in the Church. One must add that this point is further illustrated and corroborated in the LI inquiry.

4.7 First Layer of Coding: Growth

Having explored an initial overview of the data, coding commenced with specific reference to any growth that may have taken place due to the intervention provided by the programme. It is impressive to note that all participants in Y4 and with one exception, all in Y5 recommended the

programme for incoming TY students. This may be due to growth in faith and / or growth in social skills as elements of both were evident in the data. In the PPQ, a majority of participants felt open to and positive about their involvement in the programme. They regarded the programme as a developmental experience on a variety of levels. This response is in agreement with Lee and Murdock (1995) and Erhard (1999) who found that adolescent participants in peer-facilitation programmes benefitted on many levels.

> Their work with their peers gives them the experience of taking responsibility and filling a leadership role. They are also expected to benefit from an enhanced self-image, improved scholastic achievements, the acquisition of communication skills, a sense of responsibility and involvement in the life of the school, a better attitude and a higher social status in the school (Erhard 1999 p.99).

Participants from both cycles referenced growth on a social level, an unnamed objective of the programme. The following offers a small sample of such data:

Year - Student	PPQ: Question.8a Q8. Would you recommend this programme to others? 8a. Please give a reason for your answer.
Y4 – X46	'I would recommend this program to others because **you will learn a lot about yourself** …'
Y4 – X45	'It really made **me feel happy about myself as i know i helped** those boys.'
Y5 – Y13	'If anybody sees no meaning in faith then this is vital to try. **I not only found a meaning in faith but i also found myself in a way.**'
Y5 – Y2	'Yes, because **it has really helped with my confidence and spirituality and find myself as a person.**'

Figure 21 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

The programme elements seemed to endorse positive sparks in the participants and enhanced a sense of becoming for many. The participants spoke about finding themselves, feeling happy with themselves and learning about themselves. This new level of security in the young men permeated the tone and content of many responses. Perhaps this signals that elements of the programme can be

seen as supportive to adolescent social development as a stand-alone impact that has the potential to co-exist with a developing faith. In terms of the authors who create programmes to support adolescent social growth in a non-faith environment, this research has shown that when young people take part in leadership training and mentor younger pupils, they evidently flourish on a social level.

4.8 Growth of Religious Faith

Having acknowledged that growth on a social level was evident for the participants, I then explored the data for evidence of growth in faith. The PPQ responses did show that many participants experienced growth on a faith development level. To begin with, Q5 queried if the participants would describe participation in the SFF programme as a faith experience. Out of forty-six responses in Y4, thirty-three answered 'Yes', and out of forty-nine responses in Y5, forty-three answered 'Yes'. In total, out of ninety-five responses seventy-six (72%), affirmed that the programme was a faith experience. It is important to note that in keeping with McNiff's and Whitehead's (2006) philosophy of action research as a living theory, I worked to enhance the authentic religious faith development of the participants in Y5 by engaging with the Y4 AR data. It is interesting to see responses from both cycles that give an insight into the adolescent perspective on the SFF as a faith experience.

In **Figure 22** below the participants told of a 'stronger connection with faith' (X20), a 'deeper understanding' (Y45), and how they shared their faith (Y39). Participant X42 refers to his expression of faith with his classmates. This signals an important point that was further highlighted and explored as a positive by past-participants and teachers in the LI inquiry This 'reconnecting' and 'teaching' of faith as well as sharing of faith empowered some participants to experience it [faith] 'more than ever before' (Y45). I suggest that the language used to describe the experience exudes excitement about a new experience of faith in action that resulted in a reconnection with faith (Y39, Y45) and a strengthened faith (X20, Y20).

Student	Q5. Would you describe the programme as a faith experience? Q5a. Please try to explain your answer
Y4 - X19	Without a doubt is the Faith Friends Programme a faith experience. We *talked about our own faith and the faith of others , and how to practice and improve your faith*. All of this is definitely a faith experience for me.'
Y4 - X42	The spiritan faith friends program is a faith experience because *you get to express your faith with other class mates who have faith and want to show as well.'*
Y4 - X13	*I am learning about my faith* and am helping younger people with their faith also'
Y4 - X20	It certainly is a faith experience *as it helped me get a stronger connection with faith.'*
Y5 - Y20	'… *my faith was strenghtened* as was the boy's faith.'
Y5 - Y45	It is because it again *reconnects yourself with the faith that I have lost a bit of it but teaching it made me experience it more that ever before.'*
Y5 - Y13	Because the programme gives you *a deeper understanding of your faith and blossoms it.'*
Y5 - Y39	I **would because** *you're developing and learning about* **faith,** but not only this bit you are teaching about *how you connected with your faith.'*

Figure 22 Q5 and Q5a Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

Many participants described a new connection with the Christian faith community and / or a new experience of faith. This affirmed one of the objectives of the SFF programme and it is hoped may offer direction to other similar adolescent faith development initiatives.

4.9 Second Layer of Coding: Role in the Church

It seems that participants appreciated being needed by their religion. Osterman (2000 p.327) found that 'being accepted, included or welcomed leads to positive emotions, such as happiness, elation, contentment, and calm'. Tuohy and Cairns (2000, p.56) add that specifically, a participative role offers one a sense of belonging and agree that this participation brings with it 'a strong sense of

affiliation and commitment'. If this happens in one's faith community, a sense of belonging may develop and a deeper spiritual connection may then begin to emerge. It may be suggested that it is this sense of connectedness and belonging that is central to the relational premise of the Catholic Church and indeed advocates for community. In agreement with de Souza (2004), the nature of one's spirituality can be called 'an expression of connectedness' (2004, p.123). Thus, the sense of connectedness that arose for SFF participants may have been an outcome of the belonging and relational experience the SFF role offered them. Further, their participative role may provide a platform for increased authentic religious faith development (Lane 2003).

4.10 Leadership Roles

The theme of belonging was included in two of the questions from both cycles in the PQ and the PPQ. The participants were queried about their 'role' and how this invited a 'sense of belonging' in the Church before and after the programme. It was hoped that this questioning adequately probed any development that may have taken place and how (if at all) it was nurtured specifically within a leadership role.

4.10.1 A Leadership Role in the Catholic Church

When asked about a role in the Church, the response from participants in Y4 and Y5 varied significantly. This may be due to the changed wording of the question. In Y4, thirty-four participants agreed that they had a role in the Catholic Church. In Y5, this dropped to twenty who felt that they had a role in their faith community. In the second formal cycle the language was altered as a response to the first set of data from Y4. 'Faith community' was exchanged for 'Catholic Church' in an effort to be more in keeping with the language of the Junior Cycle Education syllabus (2000) studied to examination level by all participants. The question asked if the participants felt they had a role as opposed to having a role. This second alteration was in response to the participants' use of language explored during the training sessions in Y4. **Figure 24** below offers an overview of the responses to this question:
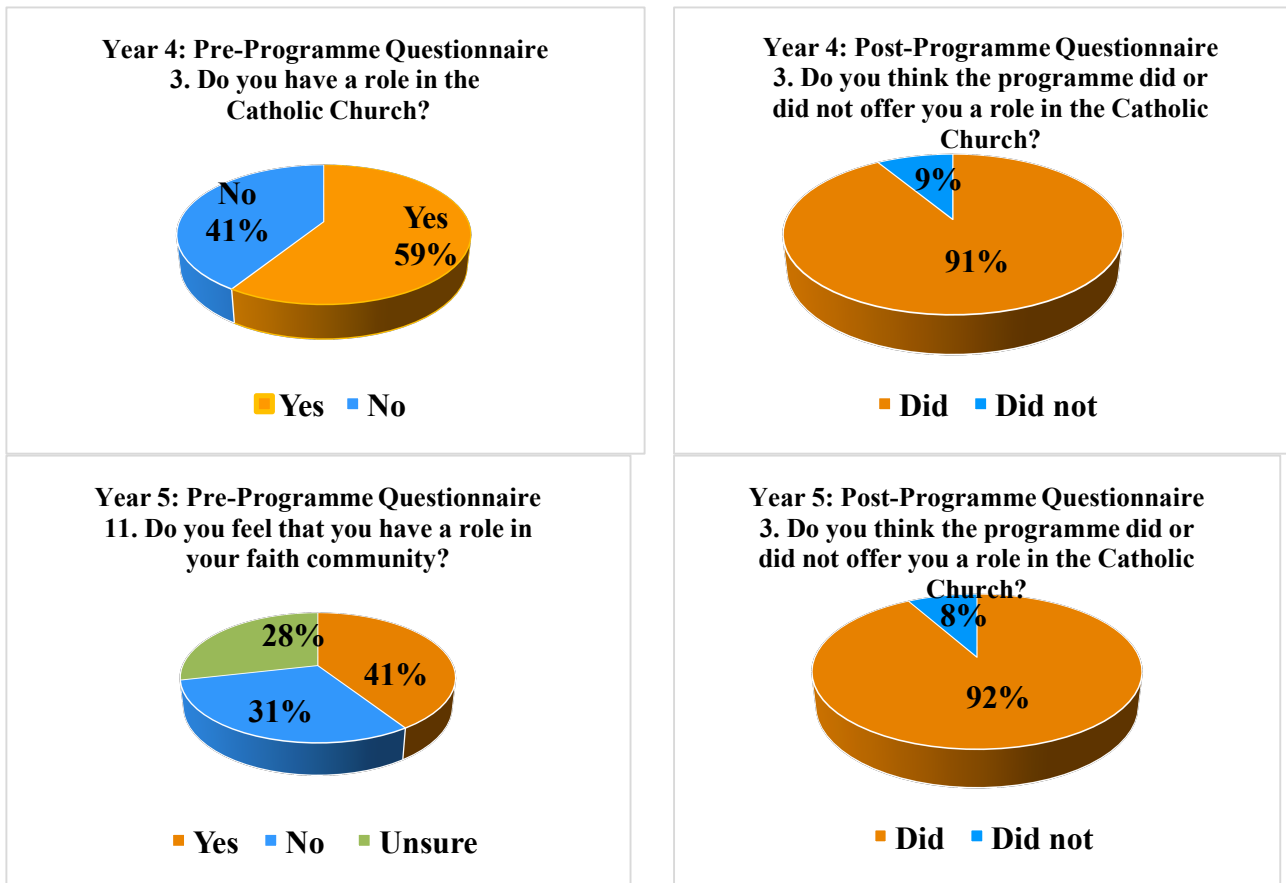
Figure 23 Table 5

There is an obvious change in the number of participants who 'have' a role as opposed to those who 'felt' that they had a role. The adjustments emerged as the coding of responses inY4 helped me realise that if adolescents are invited to articulate their thoughts on their faith perspective, it is necessary to work with them on the language of faith. In Y4, when participants were asked to explain their response to Q3 many noted that they thought they may have a role but were unsure. Thus in the second formal cycle 'Unsure' was added as an option to the drop down menu. This particular tab yielded a definitive response from fourteen participants who were decidedly 'unsure'. A further fifteen felt they had no role.

For the PPQ in both cycles, the phrase Catholic Church was used in an effort to avoid any ambiguity. The data above shows that over the two cycles involving one hundred and ten participants who filled in the PQ, fifty-nine (49%) stated they had a role in the Catholic Church/faith community. In the post-programme evaluation, ninety-one out of the ninety-five (87%) PPQ participants felt that they had been offered a role in the Catholic Church. One may suggest that a significant change occurred when the adolescents were afforded a leadership and thus

an attractive role in their faith community. For the participants in Y4 and Y5 who did not feel that the programme had offered them a role, a look at some of their responses is insightful:

Student	Q3. Do you think that the programme did or did not offer you a role in the Catholic Church?
Y4 – X21	'i **dont want a role** in the catholic church'
Y4 - X24	'No. **Nothing I do affects the Catholic Church.** I don't influence any decisions.'
Y5 – Y42	**I dont think that preparing the lads for their confirmation** warrants a position in the Church
Y5 – Y2	**'it didnt really have anything to do with the church'**

Figure 24 Q3 Post-Programme QuestionnaireY4 and Y5

This data echoes the findings of Tuohy and Cairns (2000) who found that for young people Church affiliation was often tied to a narrow interpretation of ' "clerical" activities' (2000, p.200). Tuohy and Cairns (2000) add that the need for a 'meaningful spirituality' goes far beyond this limited interpretation of a role within the Church. Roles that develop one's sense of selfhood, confidence and a search for meaning seemed to empower a wider interpretation of participation in and belonging to, one's faith community. Post SFF programme, 87% of participants felt that they had fulfilled a role which had caused them to feel part of, and 'important' (X18) in their faith community. Phrases such as 'leader' and 'teacher of faith', 'more responsible', 'active member', and 'our Catholic Church' were used to illustrate the new experience of perhaps a greater sense of adolescent belonging and connectedness within the faith community. In the words of participant X46: 'There was a real sense of community in the programme. I belonged as a leader, a Catholic.'

4.11 Third Layer of Coding: The Language of Faith

It is suggested that the language of faith used by the participants to describe their faith may be far removed from the living practice of their actual faith. For a male adolescent who is in a moratorium year (Erikson 1963), in a searching life stage (Marcia 1980) and / or a religious faith seeking stage (Fowler 1981; Lane 2003), the understanding and appreciation of the language of faith is crucial in order to move forward (or within) a faith stage. This programme is aimed at adolescent faith development, thus one is particularly mindful of the adolescent drift from the Churches (Kay and Francis 1996; Tuohy and Cairns 2000) and in particular the male adolescent drift (Kenny 2003; Engebretson 2004, 2006, 2007). Kenny (2003) holds that the language of faith is often deemed

effeminate for young males who are exploring their masculine identity as well as their religious identity. Gentle words such as 'healing', 'loving', 'meekness', and 'forgiveness' can be seen as soft words and more likely to appeal to males who are more disposed to their femininity. Santrock (2001) and Steinberg (2002) suggest that boys are socialised to desist from holding any feminine traits while girls, although perhaps pressured to become feminine, are not sanctioned for holding more masculine traits. This is evident in contemporary culture where females are encouraged to play team games that previously would have been deemed masculine. For example, rugby (Woman's six Nations Champions 2015) or soccer (Stephanie Roche nominated for FIFA's 2014 Puskás Award). Further, Fisher and Shay (2009) found that males who wish to train as ballet dancers often do so in a sea of stereotypes. In an effort to address this argument, the language used in the SFF programme was purposefully explicit in terms of masculinity. It was built around the language of leadership such as 'standing shoulder to shoulder', 'leading with confidence' and showing 'courage and bravery'. It may be suggested that this effort to employ a more masculine language may support male adolescents as they explore their religious identity in a creative, relevant and authentic way. Tuohy and Cairns (2000) found that the adolescent search for meaning and a more 'authentic lifestyle' (2000, p.200) requires a holistic approach. It may be concluded, therefore, that developing a religious language for adolescents means developing appropriate language with 'symbols that speak to the culture and concerns' of that age group (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.200).

4.12 Fourth Layer of Coding: A Sense of Belonging

This research asked:

> Does the SFF programme offer a sense of belonging to the Christian community by affording the participants the experience of a role in the Catholic Church?

The Pre-and Post-Questionnaire data readily engaged with this enquiry. The response from participants in Y4's PQ to the question enquiring about one's sense of 'belonging' in the Church showed thirty-seven of the sixty-one participants (61%) had some sense of belonging in the Church while nineteen (31%) felt they did not have a sense of belonging. One participant gave no response, a further three were unsure and one participant presented as an outlier as he responded to the previous question about role. It is interesting to note that some of the participants who felt that they belonged did not feel they had a role and some who noted that they had a role did not feel that they belonged. This was perhaps due in part to the fact that there were, 'no targets' to achieve, or as another participant pointed out, 'It is not like a club or team where there are tight knit bond.' Three

participants had a 'huge' sense of belonging in their school Catholic community and two of these students did not feel the same sense of belonging in their local Church community. '…Outside school I don't' (X42). Out of the same year group thirty-nine (85%) agreed that participation in the programme had offered them a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church:
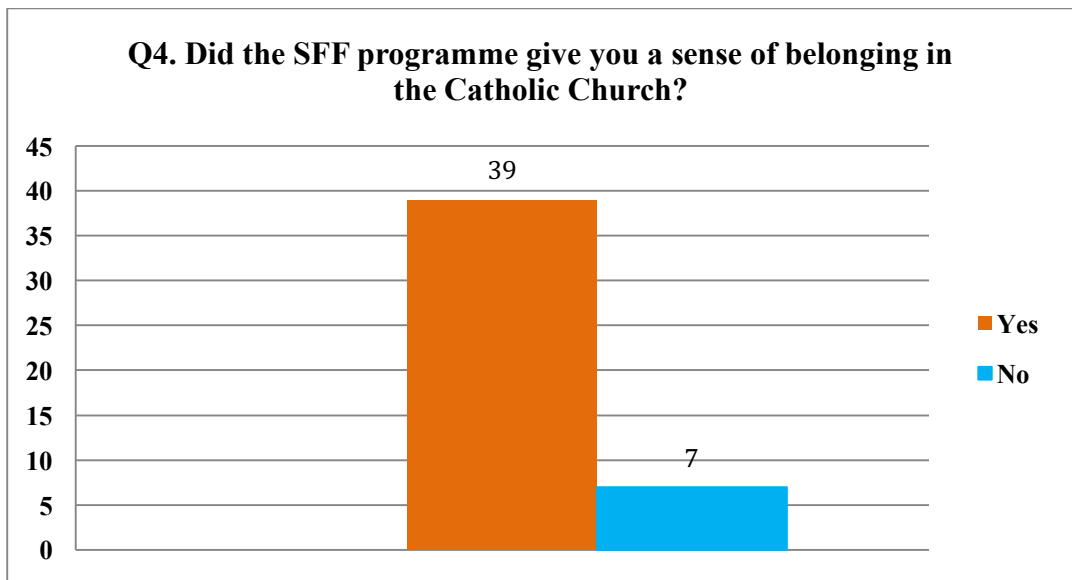
Figure 25 Table 6 Q4 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4

While six out of the nineteen participants who had stated (in their PQ) that they did not feel a sense of belonging in the Church did not complete a PPQ, out of the remaining thirteen that did, eleven felt that they had achieved a sense of belonging Post-Programme.
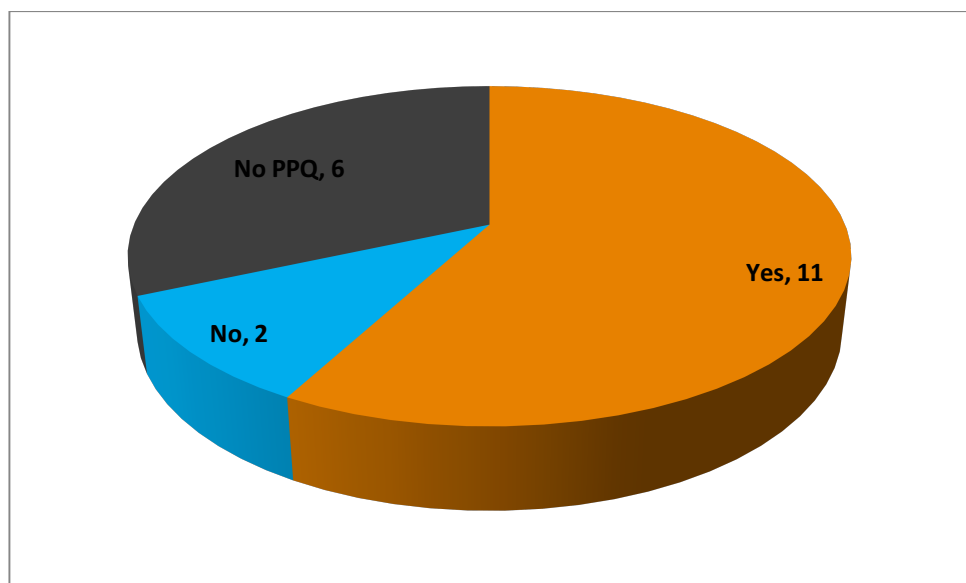
Figure 26 Table 7 Y4 Post-Programme Questionnaire: Belonging

In Y5, out of the forty-nine answers received, the data was as follows:

Q9. You have a sense of belonging in many groups, clubs and communities; do you have a sense of belonging in your faith community?
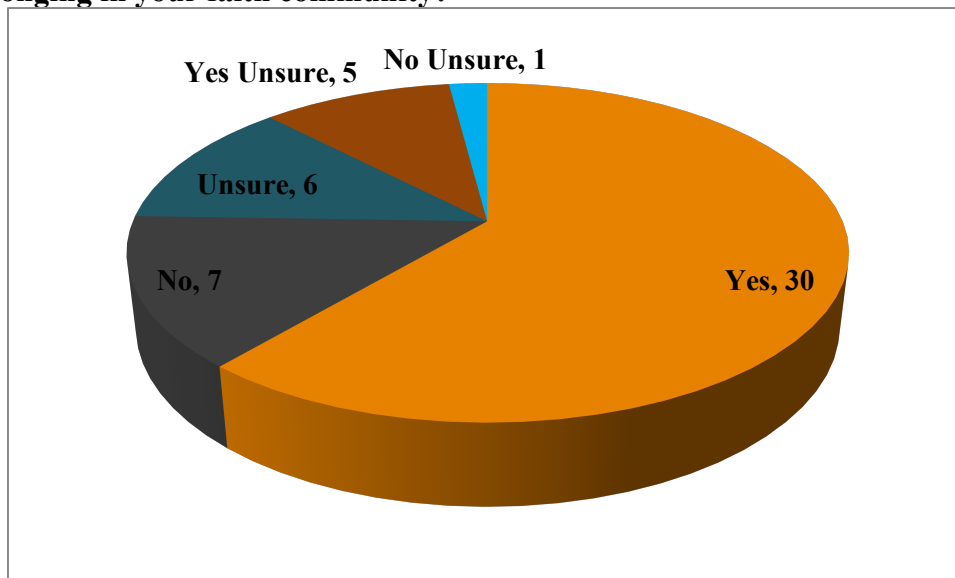
Figure 27 Table 8 Q9 Pre-Programme Questionnaire Y5

Five participants ticked the 'Yes' and 'Unsure' box, one participant ticked the 'No' and 'Unsure' box and six participants were undecided about how they felt. The PPQ showed that thirty-eight participants (77.5%) felt that the programme had offered them a sense of belonging, seven were unsure and four said it did not offer them a sense of belonging.

Q4. Did the programme give you a sense of belonging in the Catholic Church?
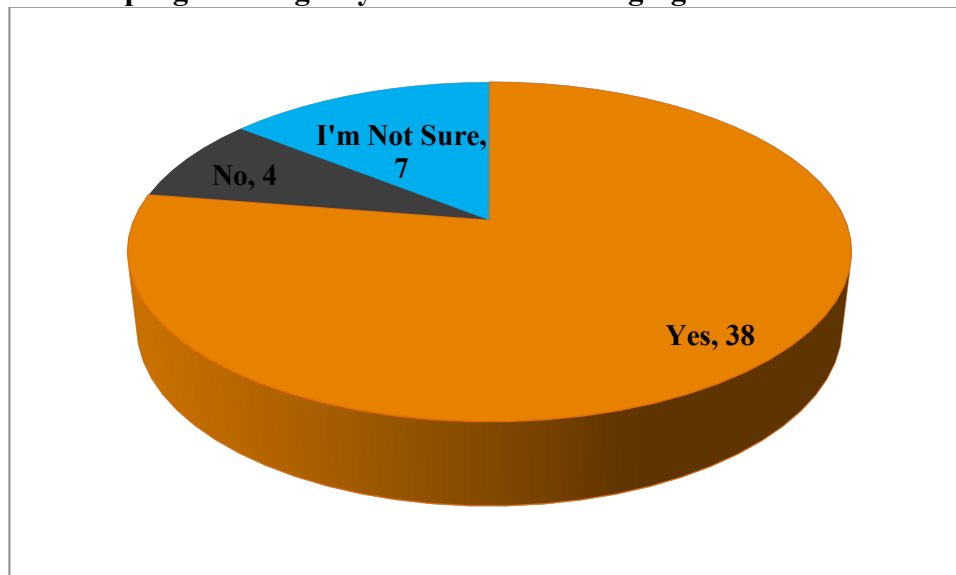
Figure 28 Table 9 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y5

Thus seventy-seven participants out of the ninety-five (81%) who filled in the PPQ, felt that they had achieved a sense of belonging in the Church by participating in the SFF programme. This is an overall increase of 12%.

Q4. Did the programme give you a sense of belonging in the Catholic Church?
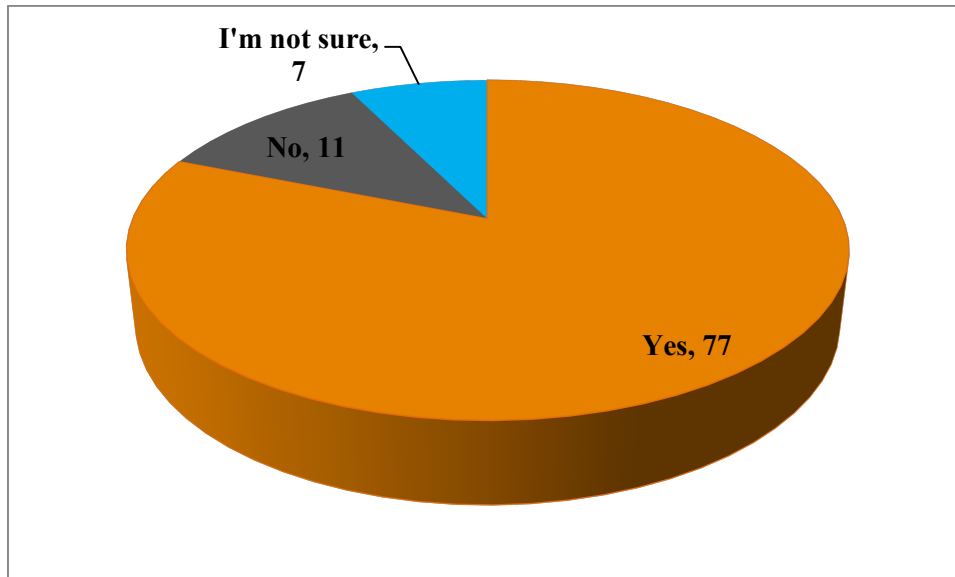
Figure 29 Table 10 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

This data suggests that a new sense of faith awareness had arisen for the participants. It may also have served to offer possibilities that could lead to achieving a sense of belonging and further, a sense of connectedness within the Church. In agreement with the literature, it is of critical importance that adolescents have a sense of belonging (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Osterman 2000; Santrock 2001; Steinberg 2002; Ellerbrock and Kiefer 2014; Shaheen, 2014) within any community that wishes to grow and empower future committed generations.

4.12.1 The Language of Belonging

The language used to describe the sense of belonging informs this study and it is hoped that it will assist FD programme creators in the future. As noted, in quantitative terms there was a rise of 12% in participants who in the Post-Programme assessment felt a sense of belonging in the Church. In **Figure 31** below, I provide a sample of findings on the question of belonging to the Church.

Student	Did the programme give you a sense of belonging in the Catholic Church?
Y4 - X17	'During one of the sessions we talked about *belonging* and what it meant to belong to the Catholic Church. The programme *has definitely given me a sense of belonging as I feel that I have now played a role in the Catholic* Church, and I felt a part of Church as a whole.'
Y4 - X11	'Yes it did, because *it gave me a great sense of community*, working with the guys'
Y4 -X15	'Yes *I earned a sense of belonging through the programme*...'
Y4 -X8	'*Every person made us feel welcome and gave us praise for what we were doing*'...
Y5 - Y38	'I felt like I was *a bigger part of the community* and religion. This was the *first time that I was able to talk about my faith and to share it with others*.'
Y5 - Y22	'Not only did I receive a role in the group, *I felt that my veiws and sense of spirituality were needed, that my personal relationship with God was something important and valued within the Church and could be used to help others*.'
Y5 - Y41	'it made me *feel like someone who could explore his faith and share it with others. It made me feel like my faith had a purpose*.'

Figure 30 Q4 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

The sense of belonging was positive for the participants as the language employed exuded confidence and illustrated a sense of pride in the experience. The participants enjoyed the respect and the recognition of their peers and others for their efforts. Perhaps more importantly, participants made the connection between the SFF programme and the Catholic Church and displayed courage in showing this finding. I am in agreement with de Souza (2004) who argues that the development of adolescent religious faith and / or spirituality is an expression of connectedness. For these participants belonging was rooted in a religious faith (Harris and Moran 1996). An overall view of the key language chosen to articulate the sense of belonging is presented in **Figure 32** below.
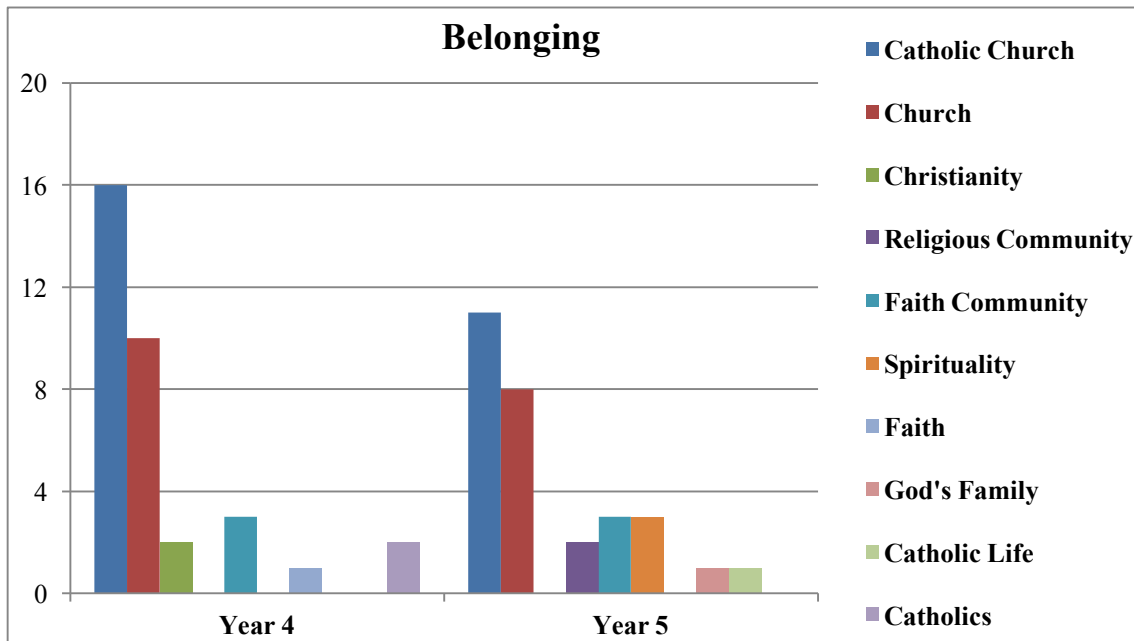
Figure 31 Table 11

It is interesting to observe that while the terms 'Christianity' and 'Catholics' were used in Y4, they were not used in Y5. The constructionist epistemology informing the study together with the aim of experiencing the AR as a living theory (McNiff and Whitehead 2009) yielded a concerted effort on my part, in the second cycle, to explicitly mentor the participants' use of language as they articulated their experience of faith. The Y5 participants' frequent use of the term 'spirituality' may echo this concerted effort.

The 'multiple realities' (Creswell 2007, p.16) constructed by the participants as they articulated their belonging were positive and life-affirming. From a social constructionist point of view, the articulation of belonging was symbolic and evocative of the new experience and its impact on the participants. In my view, the data presented here is crucial to the development of such programmes as well as the future development of adolescents gaining a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church. Not only did the participants articulate a sense of belonging, that sense was endorsed when they were made feel welcome and awarded praise as a result of their participation. Thus in agreement with Groff (1992, p.4), being recognised and respected by adults, peers, and younger youth 'enhances self-esteem and teens' sense of belonging in their community'. Further, Faircloth (2009, p.327) found that most young people feel they 'are invisible to many adults and adult systems' and so often feel excluded in an environment led and coordinated by adults. It would be helpful, in my view, if Church leaders would prioritise faith development programmes and

resources in Catholic schools as they may well be an optimal place to invite adolescents into an authentic experience of belonging to the Christian community.

4.12.2 Leadership

Data found in both cycles seems to suggest that the sense of belonging experienced by the participants was driven by the leadership training and subsequent peer ministry role that was offered by the SFF programme. The analysis of the SFF programme data illustrates a new level of personal fulfilment and confidence (Ellerbrock and Kiefer 2014) that was evident in the participants' ability to articulate purposeful answers that referenced their religious faith. Participant X16 stated that his faith was now 'very important' and that he felt 'needed' by his religion, participant X15 enjoyed being 'a leader in the eyes of the Church' while participant X32 had begun to look at his faith 'in a different perspective'.

Student	'Over the course of the Spiritan Faith Friends programme, has your faith become more important or less important to you?'
Y4: X18	'I have realized that faith is very important and it has ***more meaning*** to me now. Helping the lads through their conformation ***had a big effect on my faith as I felt I was needed*** in my religion '
Y4: X15	'... this programme has *given me the courage to speak about faith* and got me to participate in mass more and pay attention, rather than going to take a back seat. ***It has also taught me to become a leader in the eyes of the church.***'
Y4: X32	'I feel that since I participated in the programme, I have ***looked at faith in a different perspective.*** It was a great experience ***working as a mentor for the students*** making their confirmation.'

Figure 32a Q1 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4

Similar responses in Y5 showed that faith for the participants had been 'strengthened' (Y24) by the leadership role and a new 'understanding' (Y42) of their faith, as illustrated in the **Figure 33b** below;

Y5: Y11	'As I was learning more *from a leadership* position. The homework [Reflective journal] that I did made me think of my confirmation more, when I was in sixth class.'
Y5: Y24	*'Training and becoming a leader* has developed me as an individual and therefore has changed *my view of faith and hence strenghtened it.'*
Y5: Y42	'i have *developed more of an understanding of my faith* and see more of a *reasoning behind my faith.* I understand how important it is to lead now to *take charge.'*

Figure 32b Q1 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y5

The leadership and peer-ministry roles seem to have promoted an experience of the programme as an authentic encounter with a sense of belonging. It has been clearly shown in this research that the sense of belonging evolved from the connectedness in the reciprocal relationships between the participants and the sixth-class pupils.

It should be noted that not all participants felt this level of encounter or sense of belonging. However, a significant number of participants did experience a strong sense of belonging. In addition, the LI data suggests that confidence gained from the programme seemed to grow as each adolescent matured. It may be suggested, therefore, that the leadership training and experience of the programme are central to supporting adolescent growth (Lee and Murdock 1995; Erhard 1999) and often created a stronger platform for personal growth. In agreement with Tuohy and Cairns (2000), the leadership training and leadership role spoke to the culture of adolescents who were deciding on a career and searching for an 'authentic lifestyle' (2000, p. 200).

4.13 Fifth Layer of Coding: Suggestions for Future Practice

As the mode of inquiry for this study emerged from an Appreciative Inquiry, the focus is on a generative impact for the Catholic faith community. The final questions on the PPQ related to this concept:

Q8. Would you recommend this programme to others?

Q8a. Please give a reason for your answer.

Out of forty-six responses in the first cycle and forty-nine responses in the second, all participants, with the exception of one, recommended the SFF programme for incoming TY students. The

rationale offered varied from a new faith awareness and / or development, to having experienced personal and social growth, as illustrated in **Figure 34** below.

Student	Q8. Would you recommend this programme to others? 8a. Please give a reason for your answer.
Y4 – X1	Yes: 'It *really made me feel happy about myself as i know* i helped those boys'
Y4 – X6	Yes: 'I would *recommend it to anyone that believes*, as a way to express their faith.'
Y5 – Y40	Yes: 'I would recommend this to others as it *truly is a once in a lifetime experience. It is something also that you can take with you for the rest of your life* (e.g. the skills learned) especially blessing the students. *I was very proud of myself then.'*
Y5 – Y2	'Yes, because it has *really helped with my confidence and spirituality and find myself as a person*'
Y5 – Y12	Yes: 'Not only was this programme very enjoyable due to the boys, *it has also enlightened me on leadership and opened my eyes to my relationship with God.*'

Figure 33 Q8 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y4 and Y5

The participants felt 'happy' (X1) and were confident to share their thoughts on their new experience of faith in action. They spoke of finding 'confidence' (Y2) as well as having their eyes opened to a 'relationship with God' (Y12). It may be suggested that the above sample of responses clearly illustrates the wholehearted support from the participants in the programme as well as their genuine rationale for their positive reviews and recommendations. In addition, the sense of fun and enjoyment derived from participating in the programme, as illustrated in teacher interviews during the subsequent LI inquiry, was of lasting value.

TM21: Okay, you see that's very important for those guys......

Interviewer: Okay, that's very interesting

TM21: I think that's a very important element, I think that you know, I see the same thing coming through on the 6th year retreats, you know, it's spirituality and fun,

they're not mutually exclusive you know! … in fact it mustn't, it mustn't! It must have some of that 'fun', you know Francis, Pope Francis talks about joy, you know……'

It was evident from the participant responses that 'fun' elements of the programme were necessary and served to nurture further growth.

Student	8. Would you recommend this programme to others? 8a. Please give a reason for your answer.
Y4 – X9	Yes: It is very *satisfying*
Y4 – X26	Yes: The programme was **the best** extra curricular programme i did this year. It was *very worthwhile* for the 6th class men and myself and I recommend the programme to all of next years 4th years.
Y5 – Y23	Yes: The experience is the *most valuable experience I have had so far in transition year* and it is quite definately the *most memorable and enjoyable*.
Y5 – Y45	Yes: I thought the programm was *very enjoyable and stress releasing*

Figure 34 Q8a Post-Programme Questionnaire

The participants in the programme provided positive feedback and viewed the programme as 'really satisfying', 'very worthwhile', 'the best extra-curricular programme', the 'most valuable and the 'most memorable and enjoyable'. As facilitator and researcher, I felt it important to note that this positivity gained momentum in each AR cycle and was articulated by all participants in the LI inquiry. In agreement with Lee and Murdock (1995) and Erhard (1999), I suggest that to afford youth the opportunity to mentor and lead proves an invaluable tool. This particular opportunity to mentor and to lead seems to have proven 'memorable' in an enjoyable environment within a religious faith setting. It may be hoped that the merit of this opportunity and the growth it engendered will gain further traction in the participants' lives. This is further illustrated in Pope Francis' invitation to experience the joy of the Gospel.

4.13.1 Change

When asked what they would like to see more of in the programme, the majority of participants requested additional time for the peer-ministry sessions. This suggestion may have evolved from a sense of relationship and responsibility with the sixth-class pupils and / or was simply a request to prolong the programme. In Y4, four students requested additional time within the TY group while 1 student (X6) suggested that a faith discussion with peers would be welcomed. This pattern was repeated in Y5 with a single request for more time to discuss faith with peers. Further, a majority of participants requested additional sessions with the sixth-class pupils, pointing out that their religious faith may have further deepened as a result:

Student	Q9. What would you like to see more of in the SFF programme?
Y5 – Y10	'Yes, I would love to see more because I feel it would make me closer with the other participants and make **my faith grow even more.'**
Y5 – Y23	'I would like to see more meetings with the boys as I found the meetings hugely **bebneficial to me as an individual and as a person of faith.'**
Y5 – Y3	'I would like to sit in **on the Cermony of Light and some of the 6th classes class when they were learning about Confirmation.'**

Figure 35 Q9 Post-Programme Questionnaire Y5

Of additional interest here is participant Y3's request to 'sit in on the Ceremony of Light…' This request, along with another for more time with the sixth-class pupils, illustrates the impact of the reciprocal relationships formed and genuine connectedness found as a result of the programme. It was of interest to find similar data that showed the participants had made a connection between the learning and the doing (Hendrick 2011). Teaching about the sacrament of Confirmation clearly acted as a catalyst for the participants and helped them engage in faith development for themselves. This leads us to the Focus Group Interviews (FGI's) where the data analysed above was echoed and developed.

Focus-Group Interviews

4.14 Introduction

In Y4, a Focus Group Interview (FGI) was held with one group of students from one school while in Y5, two FGI's were held in the other participating schools. The FGI's open-ended questions yielded interesting data. (Please see Appendix 5 to view the FGI questions). I decided to explore the participants' reactions to the global SFF experience, paying special attention to the participants' thoughts on any sense of faith development and / or connectedness that may have occurred due to the relational emphasis and sense of belonging offered by the programme.

4.14.1 The Spiritan Faith Friends Experience

To open the FGIs, the participants were invited to discuss their experience of SFF. In the three FGIs, the participants were unanimous in their praise of the programme. A sense of personal as well as communal reward became evident. Words and phrases such as 'confident', 'positive' and 'proud' were used to express the immediate impact of the programme. Again it was noted that the leadership training and mentoring role resulted in a new-found confidence (responsibility) and sense of achievement (reward). The sixth-class pupils and adult population of each school offered generous affirmation to the participants for their servant leadership and commitment. The school support yielded an authentic relational community as well as the sense of connectedness that seemed to arise from it. In essence the FGIs offered a platform to participants who wished to discuss openly their experience of the programme. The following is an example of a confident emerging leader, comfortable to articulate his sense of religious faith:

> … I think that eh, there is a huge feeling of pride from Spiritan Faith Friends. After sixteen years of going to Mass each week and letting the priest do the work and letting the priest do the talking and eventually we got the opportunity to help out as the younger men in the Church and I felt proud that I was representing all the other priests for example Fr. XXX, he put in decades of hard work and now they gave us a turn... (X52)

The two FGIs from Y5 showed further agreement with the above sentiment. In the process of coding the FGIs a clear pattern of themes began to emerge. This pattern that details the '5 R's', illustrated below offers a scaffolding to support a discussion of participant responses.

Figure 36 Table 12 Responsibility, Respect, Reflection, Role Modeling and Reward Walsh (2015)

4.14.2 The 5 R's

The participants' reflections on the process led them to articulate a sense of responsibility that had arisen from their role modeling as well as the respect and reward they received from their active participation in the programme. This was coupled with a personal as well as communal interest in the Confirmation preparation. The connectedness and relational aspect, in line with the definition chosen from Karcher and Lee (2002), was fuelled by the sense of belonging that was established though participation in the programme. The 5 R's appear to have given way to a new confidence and self-awareness required to step out of one's 'comfort zone' or do something 'out of the ordinary'. These phrases indirectly referred to the fact that the SFF programme was rooted in a faith context. The experience of committing to a role in the Church as an adolescent was a new experience for many of the participants who grew in courage and confidence as a result of their participation. This point is further discussed and corroborated in the LI inquiry. It would seem that for some, the overall culmination of the 5 R's may have proven generative as many responses suggested that further active participation in local faith communities was forthcoming. This 5R data is in agreement with findings on the positive impact of peer-ministry programmes on adolescents (Lee and Murdock 1995; and Erhard 1999) and further supports the findings from Engebretson (2007) who stated that young men need spirituality. This need coupled with a desire to be part of an

active Church that is relational by nature and participative by deed (Tuohy and Cairns 2000) is suggested by the SFF as an attainable goal. The participants in both years articulated a sense of belonging and worth. It would appear, therefore, that they experienced a new sense of connectedness in the Church. The following is an excerpt taken from a Y5 FGI that illustrates this point:

FGI Y4	Participant Y20
	Y20: Yeah, they had respect and they seemed to connect with us and have respect for us 'cause they knew we'd been in the same situation before and they just felt then that if we were in their situation then we were being empathetic and we knew what they were talking about... The connection with God, ... **Interviewer:** Your connection with God? **Y20:** As well as, like connecting with the boys connect with God as well. **Interviewer:** ... why, how, what makes you say that? That you feel that you connected with God? Y20: One of the things that we did was to bless the boys at the start of the programme and I never blessed anyone before so that helped me get closer to God. **Interviewer:** How? Y20: You're sharing God's love with the boys.

Figure 37

Sequences of similar responses may signal a level of religious faith development experienced by some. One might suggest that the SFF participants found a new way of searching for meaning in their lives; they seem to have experienced a sense of belonging within a religious faith context that they enjoyed in a new and unique way and indeed hoped to maintain into the future.

FGI Y4	Participant Y3, Y10
	Interviewer: And your faith, Y3's faith now? **Y3**: Yeah, through teaching, through teaching **I think it has grown**. **Interviewer:** And do you think that that will stay with you Y3 or is it just a temporary thing? **Y3: I hope it will stay with me**. **Interviewer:** You hope it will, okay. It's probably like anything you have to keep at it. Y10, you were going to say something on the spirituality element? **Y10:** Well, just to add on to Y3's point I feel like **it could grow** especially like next year with the *Ember Programme* if we keep that up as well and with the 6th class students there will be more of them in 1st year.

Figure 38

The word 'hope' carries much weight here as participants Y3 and Y10 above wished to sustain and nurture their faith. They were already looking for ways to do this and referenced the Ember programme. [The Ember programme is a follow-on religious faith development and peer-ministry programme introduced in response to similar requests from previous SFF participants]. During another of the Y5 FGIs, another participant articulated a sense of searching in his faith as illustrated in **Figure 40** below.

FGI Y5	Participant Y9
	Yeah, it's **somewhere I haven't been yet**, and like everyone said, **you get a sense of being a member of the spiritual, eh... church ... and that's something I haven't been yet and through this I actually felt a lot better.**

Figure 39

After some further discussion, he continued:

FGI Y5	Participant Y9
	I feel that everyone needs in life … **to belong somewhere** …'cause if they don't they might feel a bit lost in life in general.

Figure 40

This same student echoed Baumeister and Leary (1995, p.327) who were satisfied that 'the need to belong is associated with differences in cognitive processes, emotional patterns, behaviour, health, and wellbeing' as he asserted that his new belonging felt 'good' (Y9). It is interesting to juxtapose this notion with the findings of Tuohy and Cairns (2000) who state that teenagers felt a lack of belonging in the Church but added that 'when they did find a sense of belonging, it brought with it openness to personal spiritual formation and reflection', (2000, p.56). This sentiment echoes Lane (2003) who noted that faith development must be a personal and free act if it is to be authentic:

FGI Y5	Participant Y9
	No, no, **before this I rarely went to church and stuff** … and I actually go a few times **myself now.**

Figure 41

Perhaps the above participant became aware of a sense of growth, in spiritual or social terms, and thus became more open in terms of prayer and worship as well as to an ever-developing sense of belonging to the Church, that he deemed 'good' (Y9). The same participant noted that he belonged to many clubs but specifically named this 'belonging' as 'different' and 'new'.

4.14.3 Responsibility Brings Trustworthiness

The responsibility named and discussed by the participants was welcomed and valued. It is interesting that participant Y38 below noted that 'we can be trusted with helping other people'. Does this suggest that adolescent opportunities to hold responsible roles are few? More pertinent to this research is the finding that opportunities for adolescents to show responsibility within a faith context are few. An important question may be posed as follows: Is participant Y38 below speaking about a contemporary purported image of young people, suggesting that he wants to set himself and his group apart? In agreement with the findings of Tuohy and Cairns (2000), I suggest that the

development of a sense of belonging adds to the holistic development of adolescent faith and can, therefore, only enhance the faith community of the adolescent. This is significant for a school community within a particular denomination whose bedrock and founding ethos are Christian by name and communal by nature.

FGI Y5	Participant Y38
	It made me realise that, that, usually when we were in school that we have like teachers and people like helping us and all, and when we realised that we were going to have to do that for ourselves someday and also that we're gonna, **we can be trusted** with helping other people and **not just helping ourselves**.

Figure 42

4.15 Summary

In agreement with Steinberg (2002), faith is important to these young people and is evident in **Part One** of this data analysis. The importance of faith presented itself on a variety of levels. Additional analysis revealed that a tension existed between the levels of importance in many of the participants' personal concept of faith juxtaposed against their public act of faith. The busyness of the world, preparation for adulthood, and the modern culture of additional extra-curricular activities seem to have contributed to this tension, in terms of having a faith and being a person of faith.

This study suggests that when presented with the opportunity to share, teach and live faith in an age-and-stage appropriate construct, that offers training in leadership together with a respected role, adolescents respond positively and generatively. The data shows that across the two cycles ninety-six participants felt that their faith was important at some level before they took part in SFF. Out of the eighty-five who had corresponding questionnaires, fifty-four (63.5%) held that Post-Programme their faith had become more important to them. Of the twelve participants who felt that faith was not important pre-programme, nine of those had corresponding questionnaires showing four (75%) felt the programme had caused their faith to become more important. Thus a very significant majority of participants held that their faith had become more important post-participation in SFF. Whether or not they had this view Pre-Programme, this is significant data as these adolescents were already searching for faith. They were not random adolescents who wished to sign up for another TY programme experience.

The SFF programme was already established and known to be rooted in the Spiritan Catholic ethos of each school. It could be suggested that the participants came to the programme searching for meaning and an opportunity to explore their faith, it is noteworthy that they were already practising Christians (at some level) as opposed to being of no religious faith. Hence the notion that they were simply rating a 'new' experience does not apply in this case.

The data also shows that over the two cycles and the one hundred and ten participants who filled in the PQ, fifty-four (49%) stated they had a role in the Catholic Church / faith community. Post-Programme, ninety-one out of the ninety-five participants who had corresponding questionnaires felt that they had been offered a role in the Catholic Church. This is 87% of participants. It might be suggested that a significant change occurred when the adolescents were afforded servant leadership training and a corresponding role in their faith community. Does this suggest that because there are few non-liturgical roles available for adolescents (male in particular) that the opportunity to take on a role is denied? Perhaps this dearth of roles may lead to a legitimate lack of belonging and connectedness within the Catholic community and a corresponding drift from the Churches. The male participants in this study stepped up to the challenge presented by the SFF programme and departed their 'comfort zone' to share faith. One might agree with Engebretson (2007, p.26) who holds that boys need education in faith in order to 'draw upon their inner resources, emotional awareness, empathy and moral courage'. Within the construct of Christian Catholic faith, the data illustrates that this education served to empower and encourage the participants on a variety of levels including their level of faith development.

The literature (Büssing *et al*, 2010; Kenny 2003) suggests that the language of faith and a confidence to use it can often be a stumbling block to active adolescent faith development. This was evident at the beginning of the analysis. However ongoing reflective practice ensured that the leadership training prioritised literacy in the language of faith, thus encouraging regular faith discussion, together with a tailor-made support that empowered a fluency in the language of faith. It may be suggested that the FGI data shows that the participants spoke confidently about their faith. The analysis of the data from **Part One** is echoed and corroborated in different forms throughout the data analysis of **Part Two** to which we now turn.

Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

Evaluating Action: Part Two

Lasting Impact Inquiry

5.0 Introduction

The data analysis from the two Action Research cycles illustrated that levels of self-confidence and confidence-in-faith were beginning to grow among participants. They were becoming more confident in their self-belief and / or their religious belief. In an effort to gather concrete evidence to support this observation, I embarked on a Lasting Impact (LI) inquiry. The building of mentoring relationships within a faith development construct seemed to have had a positive lasting impact on those involved. To examine further this impact, participants from 2012-2013 (Y3) who had participated in the programme thirty months previously and participants from 2013-2014 (Y4) who had participated in the programme eighteen months previously, were invited to take part in this strand of the inquiry.

5.1 Lasting Impact

Having met with the gatekeepers in each of the three schools, the 5th and 6th year past-participants were invited to participate in the LI inquiry. My learning from the AR cycles led me to work with one school as a pilot group and then refine my chosen DCI for further use with the other groups. The LI responses will be explored separately. They will be coded with Z1 for 5th years and Z2 for 6th years. Fourteen out of the eighteen TY past-participants (then 5th years) from the school chosen to pilot the DCI made themselves available and formed the 5th year group. At the time of the LI inquiry the 6th year past-participants were preparing for their Leaving Certificate examination and were engaged in challenging examination and career preparation. However, seven out of sixteen responded to the survey.
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5.1.1 Lasting Impact: 5th Years

The opening question in the LI inquiry requested the past-participants to write down how they felt about being a Spiritan faith friend. Out of the fourteen participants (aged seventeen) there were only positive responses. **Figure 44** below is a sample of the feelings reported:

Student	Q1. Can you remember how you felt about being a Spiritan Faith Friend?
Z1 - 8	I felt much bigger and mature after we completed the Faith Friends. It was an honour to lead the boys to their confirmation.
Z1 - 3	It felt good to be able to work with the 6th class boys and help them with their faith. I was able to help deepen their faith
Z1 - 5	I was very intrigued to find out how it would make me feel. I felt very happy with myself about what I was doing. When we met with the men from the Junior School, it always put a smile on my face…
Z1 - 4	Being a faith friend helped me to develop many of the skills which I now obtain. Due to this fact I felt as if I was developing myself in ways which I had never before, as well as helping those in sixth class better prepare for their confirmation.

Figure 43 Q1 Lasting Impact (Pilot) 5th Years

The past-participants explained that they 'felt great', that 'it felt very enjoyable' and that the programme gave them 'a wonderful feeling'. One participant stated that he felt 'privileged to be chosen' and another that he 'felt much bigger and mature' at programme completion. Out of the fourteen past-participants, only one stated that he could not remember how he felt but that the experience was 'interesting'. The same past-participant became more fluent about his experience as he completed the LI questionnaire stating that:

During the summer I was head sailing instructor of the seven to ten age group and my experiences at faith friends helped me with this (Z1 10).

And added that:

he felt a part of the 6th class transition from pre-Confirmation to post-Confirmation,

Further, he felt

> more comfortable dealing with people younger than I in a formal setting (Z1 10).

It may be suggested that despite his initial inability to remember how he felt about the programme, the continuum of questions caused this past-participant to reflect actively on the experience thus leading him to identify factors about the programme that had stayed with him. Of particular importance here is that as well as participants remembering the programme as a positive experience, many refer to its faith context in their responses. Thus, as opposed to a nostalgic nod at the past, much of the language was directed specifically at the sacrament of Confirmation, the Catholic Church and religious faith,

> Faith Friends helped me feel more a part of the Church. I felt more important and relevant in the Church which in turn helped me to become a better more matured Christian (Z1 6).

5.1.2 Something Bigger

The second and third questions on the LI pilot questionnaire probed the experience of belonging. Out of the fourteen 5th year past-participants, twelve answered 'Yes' to Q2 and two answered 'No'. In terms of research it was interesting to see that many responses to Q3 discussed being part of 'the Church' as well as being part of the SFF programme. The language used to describe the 'something bigger' was illuminating,

Student	Q2. 'Did the programme help you feel that you belonged to something bigger? 12 Yes 2 No Q3. If your answer is 'yes' can you please try to describe the 'something bigger'?
Z1 14	…it was a completely surreal experience…
Z1 6	…I felt more important…
Z1 8	I felt bigger…
Z1 1	The 'something bigger' was the Catholic Church as a whole. It was the first time I felt like I was really helping other members of the church community.
Z1 5	…they respected me and I respected them which made me feel part of something.
Z1 11	I had never been involved in the church life before, apart from being an alter server, in my local church, occasionally. However, now that I have participated in the programme, I have felt a stronger connection with the church.

Figure 44 Q2 and Q3 Lasting Impact (Pilot) 5th Years

The 5th year past-participants used an affirmative 'I' for many of their answers. This proved interesting as the participants were eighteen months past the SFF programme yet still clearly aligned themselves with it. Perhaps this is a lasting impact that was subconsciously woven into the choice of language and the confidence it exuded. An interesting question arose with respect to the confidence described by the participants: Was this strengthened confidence as a result of a natural maturation and greater sense of selfhood that occurs naturally in late adolescence, or was it as a result of participation in the programme?

5.1.3 General Impact - Q4

All 5th year past-participants agreed that the programme had an impact on them 'in general', and a lasting impact on their 'leadership' (Q6), and 'confidence' (Q10). Further, the data showed that the programme had a lasting impact on the 'Spirituality and / or faith' development of eight out of the fourteen past-participants (Q8). The eight participants who felt that the programme had impacted their spirituality and / or faith answered Q9 which asked them to explain their answer to Q8. Out of those who answered in the negative, three explained their answer while three refrained from doing

so. The eight who answered 'Yes' followed with illuminating answers. A sample of same are presented below:

Student	Q8. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and/or faith? 8 Yes 6 No Q9. Please explain your answer...
Z1 2	During the programme I strengthened my faith. I **now feel stronger religiously** and **feel more confident when practising my faith…**,
Z1 3	I was able to experience the faith of others which **gave me a deeper understanding of my faith…**,
Z1 5	It was very enlightening and really **opened my mind**. It helped me realise what little things I can do that can make a big difference in **my spirituality and faith.**

Figure 45 Q8 and Q9 Lasting Impact (Pilot) 5th Years

In agreement with Hryniuk (2005), it seems that when the above adolescents were offered the opportunity to explore their spirituality within a faith tradition and engage in an act of social justice, (in this case mentoring younger pupils), their quest for meaning, belonging, and a sense of religious was met. As they explored their religious faith in an authentic (Lane 2003) way through the use of leadership-in-faith training and a subsequent servant leadership role, they appear to have embraced the opportunity to share faith and in turn moved somewhat in their personal journey of faith (Fowler, 1981). How much they have moved with reference to Fowler's (1981) FDT cannot be detected without further study. However, I suggest that the data shows that the participants were now more open towards their religious faith and its development. This point was well represented in the later LI interviews by both past-participants and teachers. With respect to the 'moments of faith' referred to in Chapter 1, it may be suggested that these participants did align themselves with a Christian / Catholic Faith. This point should be highlighted as these participants were eighteen months past the programme and yet the language they used referred to 'my spirituality' and / or 'my faith', thus suggesting the presence of faith in their here-and-now as opposed to a nostalgic memory from a past experience.

5.1.4 Faith Development Impact

The impact to the past-participants' faith development as well as of other areas is illustrated in Figure 47 below. It is interesting to note that many past-participants felt that the SFF programme had also offered them an opportunity to fulfil personal potential as well initiating skills that they have continued to use. Samples of words and phrases used by the group to describe the lasting impact of the programme were particularly positive:

Q4. Did the programme have any impact on you in general?	**14 'Yes' answers**
Q5. Please explain your answer.	I grew… I realised my leadership potential. I made a difference … … important and special … I feel more comfortable … It made me feel very vindicated …
Q8. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and/or faith?	8 Yes 6 No
Q9. Please explain your answer…	Yes: It increased my faith … I do believe that my faith has increased, as I go to mass more often and talk to God more often. I grew in my awareness of the outside world including my spiritual beliefs. Feel more involved … Was very enlightened … Experienced faith of others … Strengthened my faith … No: I wouldn't classify myself as religious … Leadership played bigger part …
Q10. Did the programme have any impact and /or lasting impact on your confidence?	13 Yes 1 No
Q11. Please explain your answer…	I now feel more confident … I felt I was a better person after taking part in the programme … My confidence in leadership was incredible (change). It really gave me confidence a boost. The impact I made on the boys filled me with confidence and I believe I did a great job.
Q12. Did the programme make you Stronger in any way?	11 Yes 3 No
Q13. Please explain your answer	Yes: I learnt that knowledge is power and power is strength … Mentally coping with the task at hand … A lot stronger in the way I dealt with different situations … It gave me the strength to work with … … stronger in my religious beliefs No: I don't think it made me physically stronger…

Figure 46 Lasting Impact (Pilot) 5th Years

These responses served to illustrate how the majority of the 5th year LI pilot participants benefitted from their participation in the programme. Specifically, the data highlighted in red signalled that

many benefitted on a religious faith development level as well as developing a sense of belonging in the Catholic Church. Eight out of the fourteen 5th year past-participants felt that their religious faith had been strengthened because of their participation in the programme.

5.2 'Synthetic–Conventional Stage'

The 'Synthetic–Conventional Stage' in Fowler's (1981, p.172) FDT, 'typically has its rise and ascendency in adolescence'. Relationships with other teens become a primary concern and opinions of peers become more significant and more important than any other (Santrock 2001; Steinberg 2002; Ellerbrock and Kiefer 2014). Fowler (1981) holds that during this stage of faith one's self-identity and faith are closely linked with significant others. If the most important voices in the adolescent conversation are, therefore those of peers, it is significant that the adolescent participants, as quoted above, shared what may be deemed to be positive lasting impacts from the programme that motivated a sharing of faith with their peers as well as their mentoring of 6th class pupils. It may be added that the participants' confidence and courage to state this was evident in the language they used. A self-assured 'I felt' was used thirty-two times, and an assertive 'I feel', a further nineteen times. What the participants felt and feel is illustrated in **Figure 47** below:
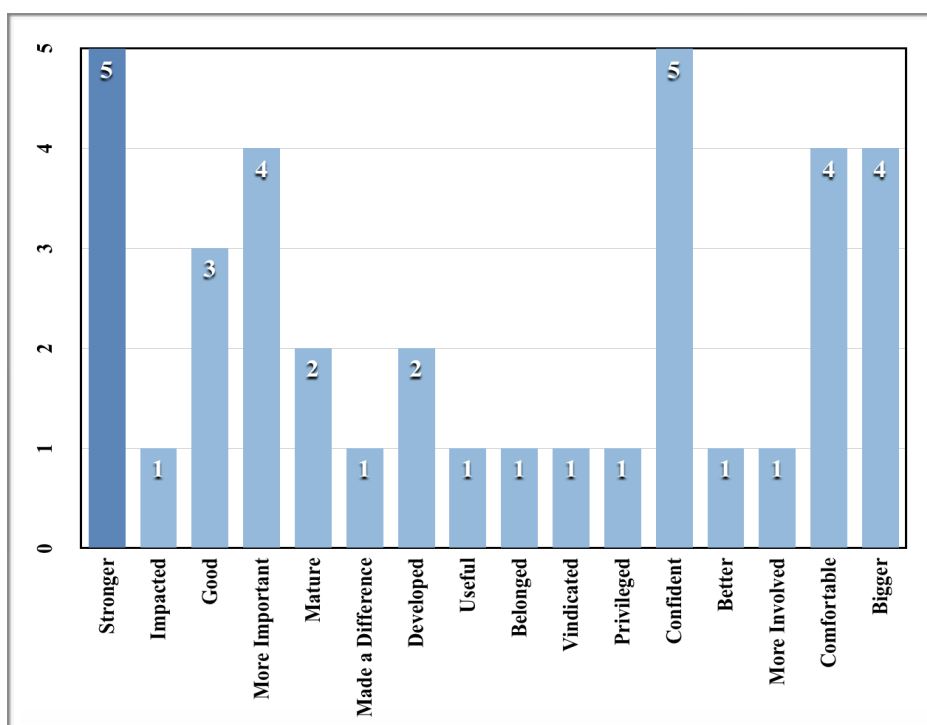
Figure 47 Lasting Impact (Pilot) 5th Years - 'I Feel' and 'I Felt'

The language used was powerful and affirmative. In this particular school, there were eighteen participants in the 2012/13 programme. Two past-participants had left the school and out of the

remaining sixteen, fourteen students came forward. It may be suggested that this willingness to participate in the research offers additional data.

5.3 Individualism

One must enquire if the consistent first-person language used by the past-participants pointed to a sense of inherent individualism which would be in complete contrast to the communal experience that was the SFF programme. During the later teacher interviews, it is interesting to note that during discussion about the attention the participants gave to the programme, a teacher did reference the modern theory of individualism in contemporary culture:

> I was delighted to see that, because a lot of the time the boys can be quite selfish, you know, and not think of others… (TC16)

Conversely, and in agreement with Engebretson (2007), one might advocate that it is often necessary for adolescent males to have 'a certain individualism' (2007, p.130) as they pursue their independence and personal identities. Engebretson (2007) draws attention to the challenge of educators and parents of working to support a healthy individualism that can be born out of finding one's way in life as opposed to the unhealthy selfishness permeating modern culture. In the words of Migliore (1991, 2004) 'independence rather than interdependence is our cultural bias' (2004). To echo Engebretson (2007) and, based on my experience as an FDO, many adolescents are altruistic by nature. The students from the Spiritan schools who were active in this research consistently embraced a significant number of selfless deeds during each of their school years, for example, fundraising, pastoral placement or mentoring young students. Progressing through the data above, there were regular references to 'community' and 'belonging' within the People of God.

5.4 Pilot Findings: 6th Years

The 6th year past-participants in the pilot survey were from the same school as the 5th year past-participants but were fewer in number. Seven out of sixteen responded to the survey. This indicated a concurrence with previous research by Kay and Francis, (1996), Harris and Moran (1998) and Engebretson, (2006) which states that adolescents of this age group (18+) are focussed on their impending final examinations and future career and do not have time for 'deeper questions', (Engebretson, 2006, p.336). Those who did respond remembered the programme as a positive experience. This is reflected in a sample of the language used in their responses to Q1 below:

Student	Q1. Can you remember how you felt about being a Spiritan Faith Friend?
Z2 1	…very honoured.
Z2 3	I can remember feeling happy and special. It was a compelling experience.
Z2 7	I remember feeling inspired by the 6th class students' enthusiasm to make their confirmation.

Figure 48 Q1 Lasting Impact (Pilot) 6th Yrs

The 6th year past-participants' responses as per the 5th year responses, were also written with buoyant language which suggested that for these past-participants, the experience was reflected upon as enjoyable and life-giving. The 6th year past-participants began their sentences with 'I felt' and 'I can remember feeling…' [happy and special] and so on. However, in an obvious difference to the 5th years, Q8 which asked about the impact of the programme on spirituality and / or faith was mostly answered by ticking the 'No' box. In Q9 the explanatory answers varied from three blanks to four written answers.

Student	Q9. Please explain your answer …
Z2 1	In terms of faith I didn't come across much I didn't already know since I had already made my Confirmation five years before…
Z2 7	Yes it helped me renew and strengthen my faith in God and Christianity…
Z2 4	The strength of my faith has remained the same for many years…
Z2 2	I don't follow any religion now.

Figure 49 Q9 Lasting Impact (Pilot) 6th Yrs

Out of the four participants who gave answers, two stated that faith was already part of their lives. One stated that his faith had become 'renewed' and 'strengthened' and a final participant said that he did not follow any religion. Because of the difference in affirmative answers compared with the 5th year past-participants, I decided to alter the explanation question in the definitive LI questionnaire. Q9 was further elucidated as the participants seemed to struggle with this question only. The reason for this apparent 'struggle' may be because of the content in Q8 and / or the vague

nature of Q9. It may also be that for late adolescents, the importance of preparing for the adult world took precedence over engaging with the spiritual and the transcendent world (Engebretson, 2006; Kay and Francis, 1996). Figure 50 below offers a quantitative view of the 'Yes' questions answered in the LI pilot and clearly shows the imbalance in the year groups response to Q8:
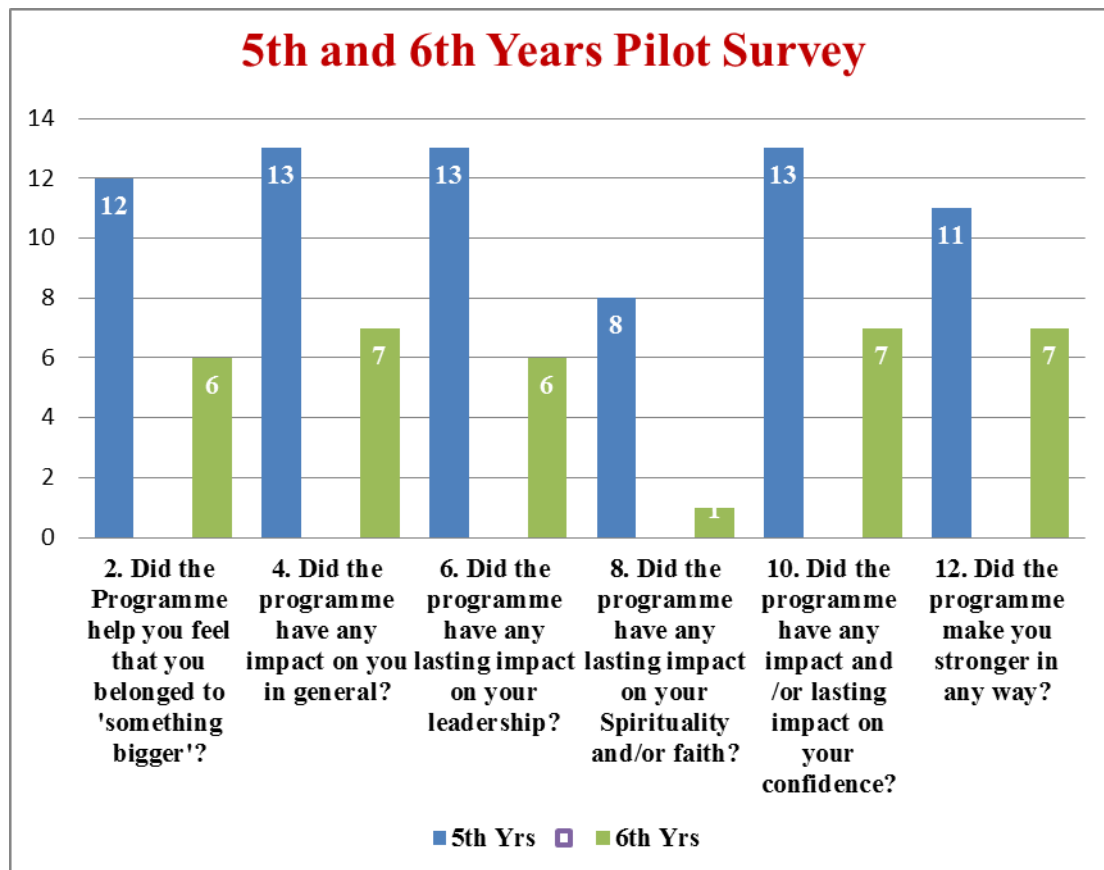
Figure 50 Table 13 Questions Answered

This inquiry will attempt to contend with or contest the above finding in the ultimate LI survey. It is hoped that the second attempt will yield a greater effort on the part of the participants to explain the answers, while graciously acknowledging their age in the lifespan and the age (Harris and Moran, 1998) in which they live. Also, in agreement with Büssing *et al* (2010) it may be helpful to add that as the adolescent matures, the ability to discuss spirituality can be 'masked by a lack of adequate language' (2010, p.39).

5.4.1 Lasting Impact on Confidence

Q11 asked the participants to describe their response to Q10 which enquired about a lasting impact on confidence. The responses from the 6th-year past-participants were encouraging as they suggested that on a social level, the programme offered leadership development, social skills and

support for confidence. This impacted positivity on all levels as opposed to the faith dimension alone. As suggested earlier in **Part One** of the analysis and again signalled here, the programme may have added potential for secular programmes as well as faith development programmes:

Student	Q10. Did the programme have any impact and /or lasting impact on your confidence? Q11. Please explain your answer...
Z2 1	'I became more confident as a leader in speaking in front of groups'.
Z2 2	'The younger students really looked up to me as a leader. My confidence grew…significantly.'
Z2 3	'I really came out of my shell.'
Z2 6	'All the children kept complimenting me and telling me how much I meant to them and how much they appreciated my time. This has made me realise just how greatlyI have underestimated my inner power.'

Figure 51 Lasting Impact Pilot (General) 6th Yrs

The buoyant language above denotes a present and real gain in both self-esteem and self-belief in the past-participants. Given that they were approximately thirty months past the programme (and a month away from the Leaving Certificate), their ability to articulate the lasting impact on confidence and self-esteem appeared immediate and authentic. This may point to the individualistic mentality in contemporary culture which may not necessarily be viewed as negative factor. It is the responsibility of family and of educators to ensure that an individualistic mentality does not become unhealthy or ultimately a self-serving endeavour. Further, an authentic faith development (Lane 2003) and leadership training programme that takes place in a Catholic school (where Christian values are imbued with a strong sense of altruism and selflessness) may provide opportunities to balance living in an individualistic society with the active pursuit of altruistic goals. It is worth noting, therefore, that the responses to the LI questions above displayed worthwhile and life-giving outcomes in terms of confidence and leadership skills, especially for adolescent males who, according to the literature, are in need of a sense of belonging and connectedness (Karcher and Lee, 2002; Engebretson 2006). In agreement with Baumeister and Leary (1995) Kay and Francis (1996) Engebretson, (2006) and Lambert *et al* (2013) this sense of belonging is deemed essential for personal development on any level.

5.4.2 'Benign Whatever-ism'

Creasy Dean's (2010) analysis of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) that found American adolescents happy to support the Church of 'benign whatever-ism' (2010, p.24) offers a clear caution to faith development facilitators. The Church of 'benign whatever-ism' (2010, p.24) sees religion as a 'Very Nice Thing' (2010, p.6) that can help one to be happy. The people of God are called to hand on a generative faith, a personal act that is rooted in a desire to love God and live God's selfless love with others. This seems to suggest that adolescents ought to be 'journeyed with' towards a searching faith that emerges out of Christian love. This love is made manifest in the Church, an organised expression of that love. In the words of Creasy Dean (2010), Christians are called to cleave 'to the person, the God-man, of Jesus Christ, joining a pilgrim journey with other lovers and following him into the world' (2010, p.7). It may be said that the participants in this research could be aligned with their American peers. However, it is important to highlight three significant points that, in my opinion, distinguish them from many of their local, national and / or global peers:

i.   They opted-in to a faith development and peer-ministry programme;
ii.   They committed to and completed all faith and leadership tasks on the programme over a five month period;
iii.   They were invited to reflect on their experience of the programme that was 18 and 30 months passed and they did this privately and anonymously.

In light of this information, I agree with Santrock (2001) and Steinberg (2002) and propose that the past-participants had no reason to offer anything but their truth. In addition, their truth did dig deeper than simply agreeing to be followers at the Church of 'benign whatever-ism' (2010, p.24).

5.5 Conclusion to Lasting Impact Pilot

The LI pilot data yielded much information together with suggestions for the next round of data collection. The questionnaire showed a distinct difference in the responses to Q8 and Q9 between 5th and 6th year past-participants. Did this signal a lack of lasting impact from the group who were an extra twelve months removed from the experience? Did it signal a lack of language to articulate an answer (Büssing *et al*, 2010; Kenny 2003), career preparation (Engebretson 2007) or simply a necessity to reshape the second question? For the purpose of this research, the latter suggestion was employed.

5.6 Final Lasting Impact Inquiry

Having adapted the LI DCI, the remaining forty-five past-participants from Y4 and fifty-eight from Y3, were invited to take part in the research. Thirty-five (78%) past-participants from Y4 (5th years) and forty-three (74%) of the fifty-eight from Y3 (6th years) opted to take part. As well as the change to Q9 some of the questions were altered in an effort to further elucidate the enquiry. In addition, and after engaging in reflective practice, I reordered the questions to allow a more fluid train of thought. (Please see Appendix 6 and 7 to view the LI questionnaires).

5.6.1 Question 1

Q1 remained unchanged and asked how the past-participants felt about being a Spiritan faith friend. The words and phrases offer a general overview of the sentiments expressed. As per the pilot study the precursor to each word or phrase was: 'I felt…'

> Proud/confident/inspired/reallygood/influential/compelling/honoured/special/
> stronger/mature/responsible/pride/a strong connection/very privileged/good
> about myself.

The past-participants described a variety of positive lasting impacts. **Figure 53** offers an overview of the 'Yes' and 'No' answers:

2. Did the Programme have any impact on you in general?

Yes	31	89%
No	4	11%

2. Did the Programme have any impact on you in general?

Yes	40	93%
No	3	7%

4. Did the Programme have any impact and/or lasting impact on your confidence?

Yes	25	71%
No	10	29%

4. Did the Programme have any impact and/or lasting impact on your confidence?

Yes	36	84%
No	7	16%

6. Did the programme help you feel that you belonged to something bigger?

Yes	23	66%
No	12	34%

6. Did the programme help you feel that you belonged to something bigger?

Yes	36	84%
No	7	16%

8. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your leadership ability?

Yes	30	86%
No	5	14%

8. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your leadership ability?

Yes	35	81%
No	8	19%

10. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and/ or faith?

Yes	15	43%
No	20	57%

10. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and/ or faith?

Yes	33	77%
No	10	23%

12. Did the programme cause you to feel stronger mentally and/or spiritually?

Yes	28	80%
No	7	20%

12. Did the programme cause you to feel stronger mentally and/or spiritually?

Yes	38	88%
No	5	12%

Figure 52 Table 14

The most obvious difference in the responses was that the further the past-participants moved away in time from the programme, the stronger the lasting impact seemed to become in their lives. The 6th-year group described a lasting impact to their confidence, their leadership, their belonging to something bigger, their spirituality and faith. It seems that the SFF programme did tap into their

growth towards selfhood, religious identity and personal development. A more detailed consideration of some of the responses to questions 6, 10 and 11 will be undertaken below.

5.6.2 A Sense of Belonging

When asked if the programme helped the participants feel that they belonged to something bigger, 66% of past-participants from Y4 (5th years), and 84% of past-participants from Y3 (6th years) agreed that it did. The subsequent question asked for a description of the 'something bigger'. The past-participants discussed how they had felt like a 'true role model', that they enjoyed 'being relied on by the group, 'setting example, 'being looked up to' and how the programme had helped them 'mentor'. These were uplifting sentiments from adolescents on the threshold of a new stage in their adult lives. In agreement with the literature (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Groff 1992; Osterman 2000; Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Faircloth 2009; Osterman 2000; Ellerbrock and Kiefer 2014), an overarching factor of any adolescent programme, in a religious faith development or secular context, is to create a connectedness that evolves from a sense of belonging and relatedness. The response to Q6 seemed to suggest that the 'experience of belonging' had been a significant factor in the SFF experience. Tuohy and Cairns (2000) recorded teenagers as feeling a lack of belonging in the Church, thus it was significant to show that given the opportunity to belong, together with the appropriate language, participation, space and processes (Tuohy and Cairns 2000), a sense of belonging in the participants' faith community where they shared a set of beliefs did emerge in due course. Further, Creasy Dean (2010) concurs that 'caring congregations help teenagers develop what social scientists call "connectedness"' (2010, p.72). When the past-participants reflected on the programme and the sense of belonging it had brought to them, much 'openness to personal spiritual formation and reflection' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.56) was recorded:

> Yes, It was a wonderful feeling of belonging. I felt I belonged to the Church, as I was a leader. I also felt stronger, mentally and emotionally as a leader. Being a leader, I felt that I succeeded in leading and ultimately, felt better about myself. (Z1 27).

> It strengthened my relationship with God and some of the reflection exercises we did helped this (Z1 31).

One past-participant actually responded in a most telling way, and stated that

Yes… Faith Friends opened my heart (Z2 31).

Faircloth (2009, p.323) notes that much specialist research in the area of 'belonging' shows a sense of belonging as 'indispensable', and that it is now being proposed as the foundation for motivation and accomplishment. If may be argued, therefore, that fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness (Karcher and Lee 2002, p.93) is a worthy objective for those engaged in the creation of adolescent faith development programmes. In broad agreement with the above, Creasy Dean (2010) adds that Christianity can be a generative faith when the community of believers offer interpersonal and spiritual support to their teenagers. Looking at the data presented here, it would seem that being respected and cared for by adults in one's faith community seemed to create a generative effect that worked to consolidate a sense of belonging. With respect to much of the data in this research, it may be suggested that many participants actively embraced the invitation to belong. In the words of one participant:

> It allowed me to belong to a community… and it also opened my spirit to something
> bigger. (Z2 30)

This language goes so far as to argue that if a relevant and authentic opportunity to explore a sense of belonging within a faith community is presented, adolescents can and will respond on a variety of encouraging levels.

5.6.3 Question 10. and 11.

Q10. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and / or faith?

Q11. Please take a minute to think about this and please try to explain your answer.

The responses to these questions were of great importance to the research and the difference in the level of impact between 5th and 6th year participants was significant.

Figure 53 Table 15

116

The responses from the final LI inquiry suggested that the alteration of some questions did support the participants' ability to articulate answers to the specific questions posed at this stage of the research. Answers to Q10 and Q11 were examples of this trend. There is evidence of a complete turnaround from the pilot group responses to the final LI responses. The past-participants who were thirty months removed from the programme noted a higher rate of positive response to Q10 and Q11 than those eighteen months removed. This may suggest that the confidence gained in years had empowered the older participants (eighteen years) to be more candid about their religious faith and spirituality.

Student	Q10. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and/ or faith? Q11. Please take a minute to think about this and please try to explain your answer…
Z1 24	I felt more in touch with my faith as a result of the programme. i remind myself paying attention at masses and also praying at night.
Z1 25	It definityl strengthend my faith and showed me how I impact others faith.
Z1 26	I am now more in touch with God and will ask him for help and to lead me in the right direction.
Z1 34	I had stopped talking to God and praying for several years. The combination of the recalling of my first sacrament (confirmation) that I could remember clearly and seeing a part of myself in those boys, as well as some thought about life, has helped me rediscover my faith. It has been a very worthwhile rediscovering.
Z1 49	IIt helped me to understand parts of my faith. It also gave me an opportunity to encourage the faith of others, which is rare for me. It helped me to feel more in communion with the Church.
Z1 53	It felt great to be a faith friend. I felt honored and privilaged to be choosen and I felt great pride when I finally became one.

Figure 54a Q10 Q11 Lasting Impact Questionnaire 5th Yrs

The 5th years felt that their faith had been 'strengthened' and they were able to 'rediscover it [faith]. They enjoyed being included and the opportunity to 'impact others faith' as well as 'encouraging'

the faith of others. Of particular note is a past-participant Z1 34, who felt that he had rediscovered his faith. It is of interest to see how he lists a combination of his learning and experience of the SFF programme as the rationale behind him rediscovering his faith. It is also interesting to note that past-participant Z1 49, who was happy to have had the opportunity to 'encourage' the faith of others, something that was 'rare' for him. Further evidence of the generative impact in terms of the past-participants taking up other roles in the Church was corroborated in the LI interviews.

Student	Q10. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and/ or faith? Q11. Please take a minute to think about this and please try to explain your answer…
Z2 18	I have much more faith in the Lord and feel a lot more spiritual
Z2 26	it helped me feel closer to God and feel a part of something bigger.
Z2 31	It helped me reconnect to my faith.
Z2 44	The programme did help give a greater sense of meaning to my faith.
Z2 42	It helped me remember what i learnt for my confirmation. This in turn strengthened my relationship with God and the Holy Spirit as i had forgotten some of what I had learnt since then.
Z2 40	This programme halped me to develop my faith as it brought back to me the value that are important when making your communion.

Figure 54b Q10 Q11 Lasting Impact Questionnaire 6th Yrs

When viewing the responses to the same question from participants eighteen and thirty months removed from the research (Figure 54a and 54b above), the language that described the lasting impact was equally descriptive and impressive. While the numbered positive responses from the year groups did differ, the level of authentic articulation aligned to each positive response was similar. It may be clearly stated that the vast majority of final LI participants (including those who still had a year remaining in school) offered reflective responses to each question. Present-tense language was used to describe a living and real faith as well as the articulation of a positive sense of achievement on personal and communal levels. The responses came across as authentic (Lane 2003, 2013) and authoritative (Palmer 2010) reflections on the SFF experience.

5.6.4 Confidence

Some past-participants named the lasting impact from the programme as one of leadership and confidence as opposed to faith development. Interestingly, the past-participants who were thirty months removed responded with a higher lasting impact of faith and / or spiritual development. In this instance, what appears like a contradiction to Büssing *et al* (2010), the past-participants' ability to discuss spirituality was not 'masked by a lack of adequate language' (2010, p.39). In fact the language used was appropriate, creative and exuded an authoritative confidence (Lane 2003; Palmer 2010). The participants showed that they were capable of discussing their faith and / or their spiritual status. This data is in agreement with Tuohy and Cairns (2000) who suggest that when adolescents are afforded the language, space, process and participation in relevant faith development programmes, growth on a variety of levels does develop.

5.7 Generative

The generative aspect of the programme is of particular importance for this research. Many past-participants referenced a lasting impact of the programme as one that offered them encouragement to become more active in their local faith community. Does this pursuit of active belonging to their local faith community signal a growth in selfhood that pointed to a psychological development from crises to commitment (Marcia 1980)? As per the findings of Engbretson (2007), the participants may have decided that they 'need spirituality' and in agreement with Harris and Moran (1998) one that is rooted in religion. It may be suggested that this question also connects with Creasy Dean's (2010) suggestion that the experience of belonging to such a faith community encourages [young] people to cleave to the person of Jesus and continue to live Gospel values within that same community. The LI questionnaires brought a rich layer of additional data to this study. It is therefore suggested that adolescent age-and-stage appropriate FD programmes can continue to impact participants for at least two years after participation.

5.8 Summary

The LI inquiry was completed in two stages. The first stage consisted of a questionnaire that was piloted with 5th and 6th year past-participants in one school and then re-presented in two other schools. The analysis of the second presentation of the LI DCI showed that the SFF programme had made a definitive lasting impact on all past-participants. The Lasting Impact data illustrated strengthening lasting impacts that served on a variety of levels. Interestingly, the analysis suggested that the further the participants moved away in time from the programme, the stronger each lasting impact became. This was evident in the quantitative data that arose from 5th and 6th year past-

participants. For example, 66% of the past-participants from Y4 (5th years) felt part of something bigger. For the same question, 84% of the 6th year past-participants stated that they felt part of something bigger and continued that the programme had helped them achieve a sense of belonging in the Church. Responses to all quantitative questions (as seen in Figure 53) showed that the affirmative answers from the group who were thirty months past the programme were in a majority.

The Lasting Impacts named were an appreciation of growth in self-confidence, leadership skills, belonging to something bigger, spirituality and / or faith. It may be suggested, therefore, that the SFF programme supported growth towards selfhood, religious identity and various levels of personal development. When discussing the Lasting Impact on their spirituality and / or faith, the past-participants used present-tense language to describe what came across as a living and real faith. A further important element in the findings was a positive sense of achievement on a personal as well as communal level. The question on faith and spirituality was also of particular interest. When adjusted post-pilot, this gave rise to a higher number of 6th year past-participants than the pilot with 5th years, who responded that their faith and / or spirituality had been impacted positively and that the impact had lasted.

The data that showed the programme as generative was of additional interest. Many past-participants referenced a lasting impact of the programme as one that had continued to encourage their participation in local and school faith communities. It may be suggested that this particular Lasting Impact should form the basis of an additional study. Given that active and owned faith is a lifetime pursuit (Fowler 1981), the sacramental celebration of Confirmation, in keeping with its theology, serves as a launch pad for a generative and growing faith as opposed to the landing pad. For many participants or recipients the sacrament of Confirmation has become, the 'sacrament of exit' from the Church (Tuohy and Cairns 2000; McHale 2006; Ryan 2008).

5.9 Individual Interviews

During the final LI questionnaire distribution, past-participants from each school were invited to undergo a short unstructured interview. Three students from two schools and one from a third made themselves available. Due to the timing (May 2015) and study pressure on 6th year past-participants, only one came forward. All other interview participants were 5th year past-participants. In total, 7% of participants in the LI inquiry questionnaires came forward for interview. (Please see Appendix 8 to view the interview questions).

In response to the analysis of the student interviews, it was further decided to invite Religious Education Teachers and Transition Year Coordinators for interview. A further seven interviews took place. Taken together, these fourteen interviews were a continuation of, and conclusion to, the LI inquiry.

Student Interviews

5.10 Student Interviews

The student interviews were coded using three themes. The first theme concentrated on the overall lasting impact, the second explored any developments in either faith or leadership, and the third enquired if the Catholic-school environment was a supportive setting for the programme. The student interviewees were allocated codes that began with Z1 as there was only one 6th year student.

5.10.1 Overall Lasting Impact

The first set of coding revealed that there was a wide variety of positive lasting impacts from the programme. This was in agreement with past informal evidence and the AI mode of research. As per the LI questionnaires, many students identified a lasting impact that was strengthening as opposed to weakening. A growth in confidence was articulated by all candidates and a stronger capacity for leadership and public speaking were common positive lasting impacts. In concurrence with the earlier FGI's, abundant and explicit evidence of the 5R's were found: responsibility, respect, reflective practice, role modeling and reward.

Word	Number of times Mentioned
Responsibility	7
Responsible	4
Respect	10
Role Model	3
Reflection	8
Reflect	8
Reflecting	4
Rewarding	3

Figure 55 Table 16 5 'R's in Interviews

5.10.2 Responsibility

The interviewees felt empowered by the responsibility offered to them as they led the 6th class pupils. Z1 C65 stated: 'I learned responsibility' and added that the programme helped him realise 'you have to account for what you do.' Z1P90 mentioned that 'you really need to be cognisant of how you act around them' [6th class]'. All the interviewees seemed to enjoy taking a responsible role even if some found the reality a tough challenge:

> So I said, okay, so there's a certain amount of pressure put on me now, but I'm going
> to be able to overcome it and I proved that… (Z1 P90).

During his interview, Z1 P90 noted that he had 'a brilliant experience', felt 'privileged' and 'more responsible' in the Church. He added that the experience of seeing his group on Confirmation day gave him 'huge satisfaction'.

5.10.3 Role Models, Respect and Reward

The interviewees all enjoyed being role models. They felt respected:

> They listened to every word you said and they actually wanted to listen to you
> (Z1 P90),

…they just looked up to you so much and they thought that you were king (Z1 N56).

The participants stated that it was rewarding,

…that kids can come up to an older person and trust them (Z1 S21)

as well as feeling that

…people appreciated that I was there (Z1 W75).

It would seem that the sense of reward felt by the past-participants emerged from the recognition and respect shown to them by Spiritan priests, management, teachers, family and 6th class pupils. This data echoed the findings of Groff (1992) who notes that being recognised and respected by adults, peers, and younger youth 'enhances self-esteem and teens' sense of belonging in their community' (1992, p.4). The data may also be reflective of research from Ostermann (2000) and Faircloth (2009) who hold that the need for adult endorsement and approval to enhance adolescent self-esteem and sense of belonging is essential for teens. In addition, Creasy Dean (2010) shares Whitlock's (2004) theory as she suggests that in terms of a faith community, when adolescents belong to an 'authoritative community', they are provided with 'available adults, mutual regard, boundaries, and shared long term objectives' (2010, p.72). It may be suggested that the drift from the Churches (Kay and Francis 1996) may be (in part) due to the lack of belonging often expressed by teens (Tuohy and Cairns 2000) to an authoritative community, as well as relevant opportunities to belong authentically to that community.

5.10.4 Reflective Practice

It is evident from the interview data that for some past-participants' reflective practice had become an important life skill and formed part of their daily routine. The SFF programme introduced regular reflective practice. This invited participants to enjoy their triumphs as well as learning how to deal with errors in judgement. Having first explored the art of reflective practice, the programme progressed to invite each participant gently to move the quiet and reflective moment to an opportunity of prayer. Thus in the programme, reflective practice was explored as a self-directed opportunity to develop spirituality as well as emotional intelligence. It taught that spirituality 'is not something otherworldly, separate, a pocket of prayer detached' (Byrne 2004, p.190) from the

concrete reality of one's life but is rather an explicit as well as implicit 'experience of the sacred other which is accompanied by feelings of wonder' (Engebretson 2007, p.28).

Reflective practice was wholeheartedly embraced by the adolescent participants and for some, adopted as a supportive and empowering life skill:

> I think reflection is a big coping mechanism … when you reflect it's not about beating yourself up, it's about trying to right the wrongs and trying to improve on them and saying that I will learn from this, I won't do this tomorrow' and 'I think it is something that comes naturally to me now. (Z1 W75)

5.11 Language of Faith

Throughout this research the participants ably articulated the impact of the programme on them. In keeping with the literature, this research has shown that a male adolescent who is in a moratorium year (Erikson 1963) in a searching life stage (Marcia 1980) and / or a religious faith seeking stage (Fowler 1981; Lane 2003) that the understanding and appreciation of the language of faith is crucial in order to move within a faith stage. Confident use of the language of faith may support an adolescent to be in a position to commit (Marcia 1980) or at the very least be open to faith development. It is interesting to note that the language of faith and a new confidence shown by the participants to use it arose as a theme in all teacher interviews, to be explored later.

5.12 No Growth in Faith

There were participants whose faith / spirituality were not impacted. Two interviewees presented the following observation:

> ...you don't have to be a Catholic to be nice…people are nice and don't have a religion, (Z1 S21).

The other participant did not accept a co-existence between

> …doing good things and faith (Z1 C65).

These responses are a reminder of the 'benign whatever-ism' discussed by Creasy Dean (2010). Past-participant Z1 S21 equates Catholicism with 'being nice' and for him it seems that being a moral person is the summation of being a Catholic.

A single interviewee felt turned away from the institutional Church (one out of over two-hundreed participants who took part in the formal research). I respectfully suggest that his understanding of religion and / or faith did not present as particularly developed:

> It's just so old fashioned and kinda scary, like everyone just chanting in unison…(Z1 D48).

If one probes further, it becomes apparent that the same participant was adamant that there should be more instilling of that particular school's 'way' into the younger boys. When this was pointed out, Z1 D48 failed to notice his apparent contradiction. This participant stated that he did believe in God but was at odds with the institution of the Church:

> Z1 D48:...I suppose where I am at the moment I just.....I suppose I haven't made any time for God or to think about.......
>
> Interviewer: The God question?
>
> Z1 D48: The possibility of.........yes I suppose I have always thought that there is something greater than I don't know… not just something that we all just tell ourselves to make us feel better when we die or when other people die, that there is someone greater and that everything that they did in their life wasn't just a waste …

This reminds us of Lane (2003) who discusses the difference between a crisis of faith and crises of beliefs. It may be suggested that participant Z1 D48 may have been experiencing what initially presented as a crisis of faith but, when probed, was actually a crisis of beliefs.

5.13 Growth in Faith

The data illustrates that two out of the seven interviewees stood out as displaying an authentic growth in faith. However, I propose that these participants may have struggled with the language of

growth in faith as opposed to the language of faith (Kenny 2003, Engebretson 2004). The following phrases were used:

> It's kinda difficult to articulate on the spot, in terms of what I want to say, I'm probably rambling away a bit here…(Z1 W75).

However, both past-participants spoke of a lasting impact on their faith and spirituality. That they were 'encouraged' (Z1 G42) suggested that they 'had the confidence' (Z1 W75) to share faith as well as illustrating a new-found maturity in faith. Both referenced their feelings of inadequacy to articulate their faith fully. Z1 G42 felt a definite conviction of being a Catholic and was confident to state this and to 'stand up' for his faith. Courage and bravery echoed in his tone as he described his faith. His analogy of faith as similar to cricket merits a mention here:

> It's like, hm I don't know, it's like cricket! You look at cricket for a long time and it is very, very boring but if you actually play the game it becomes a lot more enjoyable, you actually enjoy what you are doing (Z1 G42).

In agreement with Tuohy and Cairns (2000), this adolescent suggested that a participative experience is required for the reciprocal relationships requested by adolescents in the Church.

The second interviewee was definite about his growth in faith and found that participation and sharing with his peers (Ellerbrock and Kiefer 2014) in TY acted as a catalyst for his faith development. With overtones of Fowler (1981) and Lane (2003), Z1 W75 stated that

> ...everyone, no matter if they say or if they think or not, I think everyone has faith in them (Z1 W75).

In discussion, Z1W75 named the other TY faith development modules that played an active role in his faith development, for example; his pastoral placement or his retreat. He named the SFF programme as particularly impacting his 'spirituality and faith'. This makes a critical point for all religious faith-based schools. Faith-based programmes such as retreats and pastoral placements are very often not maintained in schools due to the lack of personnel and / or resources. They are, nonetheless, wholly beneficial and necessary to support the living out of a school's Catholic ethos. In agreement with Engebretson (2007) and Creasy Dean (2010), I argue that until there is an active

126

and authentic engagement with the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, (Kohler 1892) faith development will always be lacking and limited. For participant Z1 W75 above, it may be suggested the SFF programme anchored the learning from his other FD modules and facilitated his sharing of faith at peer level as well with the 6th classes. In agreement with Ellerbrock and Kiefer (2014) this peer sharing was named as being of major importance for him. Here one is reminded of participant X6 from the first cycle of AR (2013-14) who requested further opportunities to share faith within his group. It is interesting to note that some of the participants who were perhaps searching and / or transitioning within a faith stage (Fowler 1981) articulated the need for support in their peer relationships. It may be suggested that to engage in dialogue in a safe space without the fear of ridicule is conducive to development in adolescent faith.

Z1 W75 stated that he 'always' had a faith when he was younger but decided that perhaps this was 'thrust upon' him whereas now he had 'started to personalise it'. His awareness of spiritual growth strongly imbued with a moral code (Engebretson 2004) was also illustrated with a new solitary prayer life whereas previously he had always prayed with his grandmother.

> When I am reflecting, I reflect usually before I say my prayers and I mean the two
> are linked (Z1 W75).

5.14 Comfort Zone

The phrase 'comfort zone' was mentioned thirteen times in the seven interviews. Many students added considerable weight to the fact that the programme 'helped me get out of my comfort zone in doing something that all my friends weren't doing' (Z1 S21). For two interviewees this meant being called to step up in terms of confidence:

> Because I've been pulled out of my comfort zone (Z1 S21).

Yeah, it put you outside your comfort zone so you have to talk to young children and they get on well with you and stuff (Z1 C65).

Being taken out of one's 'comfort zone' was something very different for others:

… kinda leaving your comfort zone and sitting around a table with seven or eight young lads and they're all listening to you, it's something I wouldn't have done in any other programme previously, it …was about everyone (Z1 N56).

Perhaps the sense of building community and moving away from the modern paradigm of individualism was being flagged here. Z1 N56 added that 'we were a good community of friends when we were doing it'. We know that the building of community is central to Christianity, yet the concept of community is often considered to be countercultural in contemporary life. I wish to argue that when the necessary support and education is in place, a Christian communal construct that promotes active faith development is entirely achievable within adolescent culture. We are reminded of the challenge set by Engebretson (2007) to support a healthy individualism that is rooted in finding one's way in life as opposed to an unhealthy selfishness that permeates modern culture. Two participants referenced the building of community in terms of giving something back or as they later described, as acting like a big brother:

You know in 6th year you want to stay in school every single day to try and get as much as we could but I don't think that anyone complained about going off and contributing back, (Z1 G42).

…like it wasn't just about me doing something for myself, I suppose it was about giving back…(Z1 D48).

Perhaps the altruistic nature of many adolescents offers a solid rationale to Church leaders and FD programme authors to create relevant age-and-stage appropriate religious faith development programmes that celebrate and nurture the natural selflessness of youth while affording an opportunity to 'give something back' in a supportive faith community.

5.15 Second Layer of Coding

A second layer of coding concentrated on the lasting impact in faith and leadership. To begin with, Q4 focussed on the possibility of a lasting impact on faith and / or spirituality. In response to Z1 W75 who found the 'sharing' of faith perspectives a powerful tool for his faith development, I agree with Steinberg (2002) who holds that interpersonal encouragement can emerge from imitation as well as from social reinforcement and both progressions happen in a peer group. It has already been stated that for teens, the peer group and one's interaction within it (Ellerbrock and Kiefer 2014) are

of critical importance in coming to an awareness of oneself. Z1 W75 regularly referred to enjoying the sharing of faith perspectives in a group setting. Z1 S21 and Z1 P90 both referenced the 'fear' or 'slagging' that can happen when one opts for any practice that is faith-based yet on the other hand was pleased that 'the whole school was behind it' and that they would 'not get frowned upon by other students' (Z1 S21). In a telling statement cited earlier Z1 W75 added, 'people appreciated that I was there'.

5.15.1 Confidence for Faith Development

All interviewees were unanimous that the programme gave them confidence. It was interesting to note a link between confidence and faith development. Two past-participants found this growth in confidence an encouragement to developing their faith. Z1 G42 noted that the programme gave him the 'confidence' and 'encouragement' to 'say' that he is a Catholic. He added that taking part in the programme helped him to feel that he was 'doing something Catholic'. He continued 'I'd gladly say that I am Catholic now…' He felt supported because everyone was sharing it… 'cause you're talking to your friends about something that you don't necessarily talk about, it's something that just not talked about, especially with guys, like you don't talk about the Church' … (Z1 G42). This finding echoes a point referenced earlier and one that is particularity pertinent to this research, namely, that in school, adolescents are predominantly concerned with peer relationships and describe 'their identity issues mainly in terms of their personal capacity for relationships' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.198). The findings of Kay and Francis (1996) and of Engebretson (2004, 2007) resound in the above students' comment when he stated that 'guys' simply don't talk about faith. The point is further illustrated by Z1 W75 who stated, 'Yeah, some people hide, you know, it's not cool to be holy, it's not cool to say a prayer …'. This interviewee continued to make an essential point that signalled the necessity of supportive faith-sharing contexts in adolescence:

> I wouldn't have been big into my own personal faith or anything like that but when people share it and you hear other people's views on things you realise that it's not uncool or embarrassing to have faith, (Z1 W75).

5.15.2 Faith Development

Three out of the seven participants interviewed stated that their faith was definitely impacted and in their opinion that impact had lasted. Present tense and current examples were used to describe their faith. Examples such as regular prayer, working to play a more active role in the local Church together with developing one's own spirituality were articulated by the participants. Further, two

participants noted that their prayer life had moved away from 'the usual one, you know, can I get a car? or can I get an A1 in French? type prayer, but I pray for family and help etc, you know just things like that.' (Z1 G42). This past-participant's prayer life had grown and changed from prayers of petition to prayers of thanksgiving as well as other non self-orientated prayer. This may signal the ability of adolescents to move earnestly from self-orientated thoughts and deeds to selfless and communal orientated faith related thoughts and practice.

5.16 Leadership and Confidence

All seven interviewees agreed that the programme had a lasting impact on their leadership skills and confidence. This data resonated with the LI questionnaire responses. In the interviews, past-participants who came across as shy-by-nature spoke of a better ability to lead and to speak in groups, adding that having completed leadership courses previously, they did not feel prepared

…for what it's actually like when you're leading a group of people. (Z1 G42)

Or in the words of Z1 N56:

I feel that it was an achievement for me definitely, I won't forget about doing Faith Friends and achieving something and being a leader.

The SFF programme, based on a 'learning by doing model' (Schank 1995; Hendrick 2011) provided ample active participation that seemed to have embedded the learning and provided a scaffolded path for the emotional journey often associated with religious faith-directed content. One student's thoughts add value to this finding as follows:

Interviewer: Do you think the skills will leave you when you leave school?
Z1 D48: No, no they'll always stay with me as long as I like or...forever.

In an area such as faith development, one can only agree with Hendrick (2011), Lee and Murdock (2001) and Henderman (2012) who find that collaborative learning, group work and active methodologies all need to be considered in order to create effective and authentic connections between religious rhetoric and adolescent reality. The data above suggests that for these teens, growth in spirituality did take place as there was '…enhanced connectedness within the self, with others and with the world, … Spirituality illuminates lived experience' (Engebretson, 2007, p.18).

5.16.1 Generative Leadership Skills

It is interesting to note that the lasting impact on leadership skills was articulated in terms of its generative impact. Participants noted that they had the confidence for other leadership roles embraced post SFF programme. This data calls to mind the research of Tirri and Quinn (2009) who found that adolescents who 'engage in their quest for self within a rich spiritual context (which may be a religious community)' (2009, p.213) are afforded a solid opportunity of sustaining purpose in their lives. Thus in agreement with King (2008), the research undertaken by Tirri and Quinn (2009) referenced above suggests that a community of faith may well provide fertile ground for adolescents as they search for meaning and identity and explore the deeper questions in life. In the words of Z1 W75 'it's not uncool or embarrassing to have faith and to have thoughts on life'. Or Z1 G42, who suggested that the opportunity to share faith was rare:

> …cause you're talking to your friends about something that you don't necessarily talk about, it's something that just not talked about, especially with guys like you don't talk about the Church. (Z1 G42)

5.17 The Catholic School

The final layer of coding centered on the last interview question that queried the efficacy of a Catholic school as a supportive setting for the programme. While the consensus was that the programme could run in any setting, it was noted that supportive structures in the Catholic school were more conducive to an FD programme. It was agreed that as the programme was rooted in the sacrament of Confirmation, a Catholic context was more 'encouraging' (Z1 G42), had a supportive ethos (Z1 N56), (Z1 P90), (Z1 W75) and was beneficial as 'the whole school was behind it' (Z1 S21). Many of the interviewees articulated a strong degree of respect and loyalty to their school's ethos and to the founding order, the Spiritans, while one named the school chapel as a place of reflection.

Participants fondly named and remembered priests from the Spiritan community on campus. They noted those who have a visible presence in their school and have been supportive to them in general. The affirmation from management and teachers was also named as being helpful and meant participants 'wouldn't get frowned upon by other students' (Z1 S21). It may be suggested that when developing faith-formation programmes of this nature, it is imperative to keep in mind the psychology of adolescence which can manifest itself negatively as the 'fear' (Z1 S21) with regard

to faith development, or the 'slagging' and 'abuse' (Z1 P90) one may receive for pursuing faith. There are many adolescents for whom this negative attitude may prove too much to bear and hence form a block against growth in selfhood and / or faith.

The LI data is shown to agree with Maroney's (2007) study that finds the Catholic school supportive introducing students to faith, religion and a sense of spirituality. However, Maroney (2007) cautions that the Catholic school alone 'did not facilitate a lifelong adherence to the Catholic faith and an unquestioning alliance to the Christian tradition' (2007, p.30). I suggest that a longitudinal study is necessary to corroborate such findings. It may, nonetheless, be concluded from the present study, that while not guaranteeing positive outcomes to all FD initiatives, the Catholic school is a supportive and beneficial structure that offers an FD programme the opportunity to flourish. Part of this support is seen as appreciation and respect from teachers. I will now move to explore the seven teacher interviews.

5.18 Teacher Interviews

The teacher interviews added a new dimension to the research and echoed as well as amplified many of the student findings. It must be noted that the teachers, although present during the programme, did not participate directly in it. Their interviews offer a global overview in terms of impact on the participants as well as on the student body in each school. Out of the seven teachers interviewed, six were Religious Educators and one a Transition-Year Coordinator. The interviewees also had various other roles including a Religious Education Department Head, a Chaplain and a Pastoral Placement Tutor.

In order to mirror the student interviews, the teacher interviews were coded with three layers of coding. This involved exploring the themes of general response, participant impact and generative impact. As per all other coding work in this study, Creswell's (2007, p.191) six 'generic steps' for analysis and interpretation of data were followed which in turn resulted in the emergence of various themes.

5.19 First Coding

To emulate all previous DCI's, the first layer of coding concentrated on the interviewees' general impression of the programme. Five out of the seven interviewees were 'sceptical' and 'apprehensive' about the introduction of the programme. It was pondered how a school would 'fit it in' (TC16) to an already overburdened TY schedule. It was also felt that the programme may have been more appropriate for adults (TM21) as opposed to students. Some thought that the TYs may not sign up for a 'faith' programme as it was 'uncool' (TJ15) (TT75). However such fears were allayed in the experience that unfolded:

Teacher	Initial reaction to the Spiritan Faith Friends Programme
TL13	I suppose I was a little bit apprehensive at the start....hm not sure how the boys would buy into it but my opinion of it has just exploded since, it has just been fantastic in the school to have an element of you know religious leadership, religious conversation and just the buy in from the boys into the programme has just been fantastic and I know that they have gotten an awful lot out of it because I have spoken to them about it....

Figure 56

5.19.1 Whole School Impact

As noted earlier, much of the teacher interview data echoed and amplified the student interview data. However, a new and exciting piece of information emerged in the course of the research. All teacher interviewees agreed that the programme had a positive impact on the entire student body as well as on the participants. It was noted that from the commencement of the programme, the 'conversation' (TL13, TF35) about faith had opened up. This in turn allowed students to discuss religion, spirituality and faith in a new way as well as in a more tolerant environment. The students discussed faith and were now 'not worried' (TL13) being 'resilient against the negative comments' (TJ15) and more 'questioning and critical thinking … [had] been stimulated by the programme' (TF35). TT75 added that the participants were no longer 'embarrassed about their faith … they were proud of the fact that they were associated with Faith Friends and definitely you can see the confidence growing, and undoubtedly it carries on'. The positive and lasting impact was enjoyed by many and, in the words of TO22 'it has a ripple effect' and 'the other lads are indirectly involved'.

The first coding analysis also noted that the programme added support to each school's living ethos. It may be suggested that this was an important point in the light of 'the drift from the Churches' (Kay and Francis 1996), and it may also point to the beginning of a departure from this drift. The teachers were united in their deliberations about how the programme had added a renewed emphasis to the ethos of each school in authentic and relevant ways. The following table offers some examples of this:

Teacher Interviewee	Global Impact
TL13	… it's just fantastic and it's great for creating this community spirit within the school. … it's calling them by their name and you can see the 1st years going around you know an inch taller after hearing a 6th year taking time out for them so it's really bringing the school together and creating links that we've looked to do for a long time but haven't always been able to master it.
TJ15	… this was a unifying programme so it gave an anchor to the year and to the school.
TM21	And in the religion class the whole environment, the environment for teaching, it's easier for the RE teacher.
TF35	Like I see some of the first years and second years.....in their interaction with hmm...the fourth years and fifth years and they know them by name, and there is positive interaction with them and hm......and you hear stories, certainly where a second year said somebody said about their confirmation and they got it through Faith Friends Programme, these insights that the lads would have with regard to their own faith or their own experience of confirmation or whatever and the younger lads are talking about that in 1st and 2nd year.
TO22	…if they hadn't necessarily been directly involved they were very much aware of it and what has happened and they are all friends, you know many of these guys speak openly about it [the porgramme] so there is an awareness bu the fact is, you know, it has a ripple effect so even there might only be one or … like 12, 13, 14 students directly involved, the other lads are involved indirectly with it.

Figure 57

The 'community spirit' was enhanced and empowered with life as the 1st years (inclusive of many previous 6th-class members) were an 'inch taller' (TL13) and the school was 'brought together' (TF35). The 'ripple effect' (TO22) and 'community spirit' (TM21) were welcomed as positive impacts on school ethos and culture. Teachers noted that the programme had 'unified' (TJ15) the schools as well as becoming an 'anchor' (TJ15) for TY students.

135

5.20 Second Layer of Coding

A second layer of coding focussed on the overall lasting impact of the programme specifically on past-participants. According to the teachers, this lasting impact manifested itself in religion class, in school liturgies and in an outgoing sense of confidence about faith, spirituality and leadership.

5.20.1 Religious Education Class

All of the Religion teachers noted that the programme had an impact on their Religious Education (RE) classes. This presented itself in a new-found respect for lesson content, a new and confident language that informed discussion, and a higher uptake for the subject at Leaving Certificate (LC) examination level. One of the teachers added that RE class had taken on a new significance for the TY year students:

> … we have an increasing number of students each year since the programme began, sitting leaving cert religion.' this interviewee adds 'suddenly it becomes, actually its way more than anything in a textbook, it became real in fourth year and then they pursued it in fifth and sixth year (TJ15).

Another teacher proposed that the 'environment' (TM21) for teaching RE has become 'easier' as the students on the whole had developed a new-found respect for the subject. A third teacher (also a school chaplain) suggested that the programme meant that the senior students could discuss peer ministry as part of the LC course that called for examples of a sense of the sacred in the modern world. This teacher added that students had spoken about their personal experience of the SFF programme and shared and discussed with others who were then able to utilise this example in their course work. Some students who were not directly involved in the programme had become aware of the SFF programme through discussion and analysing it in LC RE examination classes.

Three teachers discussed the more fluent language of faith that had been introduced in all their senior RE classes. They suggested that this had added to the 'tone' (TL13) of whole school faith development as well as in specific class. One teacher noted the following: 'I suppose I felt very often in religion class that you have to teach them the language to have the conversation around religion' (TL13). The teachers held that the programme 'gives them the language, … allows students to articulate how they feel, how they are, … that in itself has a lasting effect…'(TO22). It was noted that very often the language of religion had to be taught to the students, almost like

teaching them the 'French verbs' (TL13) but that the programme had changed that and now the conversations were a lot more open and participants were not worried about what peers may say. When speaking about the SFF participants, one teacher commented:

…they have been involved and they've seen the benefits of it and it hasn't been a doss class or something that you do to get on the CV, they've seen the benefits of it themselves (TL13).

Further it was noted that the students were

more open to different things in the Church, they would be more questioning, (TF35).

It may be suggested that as a result of participating in the SFF programme the participants became more fluent and more confident in their use of the language of faith. The participants seemed to take part in a more confident debate both in RE classes and in other faith-related discussions:

So their faith has to be deepened by it and that plays into, you know, the RE classes in the school you know, the level of discussion, (TM21).

It was also stated that even though 5th and 6th years were a quite confident group in school, this was a new benefit from the SFF. Teaching 5th and 6th year RE meant that

...the confidence levels there, the participation there, it's no longer the doss class for a number of them, it's no longer a class where you can do a job in, this is now a class that they feel more comfortable in … it's the questions they ask, they are no longer looking around them to see, well, how will my mate react to this type of question (TL13).

This point was again emphasised by another teacher who suggested that the SFF programme had enabled students to see RE class in a new light as follows:

...it's a new way to look at it, almost like a new idea… maybe it [RE] was something naff up to third year, it wasn't an important subject, suddenly … it's about

137

way more than anything that was in a text book, it became real in fourth year and then they pursued it in fifth and sixth year (TJ15).

This realisation was noted as an instantaneous change and had a lasting impact on the culture and mind-set of the senior RE class. It was interesting to hear the teachers refer to this change as 'important' and 'real', and their suggestion that a transition was made in terms of the whole school faith development. The teacher interview data suggested that many participants' perspective on RE as a lesson in school had changed dramatically and this seemed to have had a positive and generative impact on the entire faith dialogue of the schools.

5.20.2 School Liturgies

A further illuminating point raised by all teachers was that the programme had a lasting impact on the liturgical life of each school. The teachers held that before the SFF programme it had proven difficult to have active student participation in school liturgies. Post-Programme there had been an obvious change. Teachers discussed how they were previously 'begging' (TJ15) students to read at Mass or having had to choose a particular student who was a 'good' (TT75) reader. Now in each school there was a concerted effort among the SFF participants from any year to take an active part in school liturgies. This positive consequence of the programme had not been anticipated at the commencement of the programme. In the words of two teachers there was a 'knock on' (TL13) (TJ15) impact and a 'ripple effect' from the programme. And another teacher suggested another positive effect: 'I don't seek out the lads who did Faith Friends to get involved, but they do offer their services' (TL13). TJ15 concurred, 'they have no problem standing up and saying, yeah, I'll do that reading'. It was stated that participants had encouraged other students to take an active role in school liturgies:

> It's funny, it's like almost contagious, you get four or five guys who have no
> problem standing up to read and suddenly guys who wouldn't have been asked say
> 'can I do a reading? (TJ15).

This lasting and generative impact seems to agree with the literature (Santrock 2001; Steinberg; Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Ellerbrock and Kiefer 2014) that suggests peer relationships are critical to adolescents. The positive impacts of the programme resound through the positive and meaningful liturgical and RE participation from those who did not participate in the programme. One may suggest that this impact was also empowering for the teachers as they came across as more

confident in their own approach towards student participation in school liturgies. One teacher recounted a very poignant example of a time when there was a bereavement in school and the assistance of students was required. This teacher felt that due to the new culture embedded by the SFF programme it was not necessary to look for the 'best' (TT75) reader any more but rather to

> go for the fellows I knew would do … it more meaningfully, I didn't necessarily want the best readers, I wanted fellows who felt that this was important…. it's meaningful for them, they have a trust in what's happening… (TT75).

5.21 Confidence

The second layer of coding for the teacher interviews categorised data on confidence. It was stated by all interviewees that the students had a greater sense of self-confidence post-SFF. This newfound self-confidence manifested itself in the TY participants, in the 5th and 6th year students and was also evident in the 1st and 2nd year students who had been in the 6th classes that were 'faith friended'. The teacher interviewees remarked on a new sense of community that had emerged due to the show of confidence among the participants Post-Programme (TL13, TF35, TM21, TO22, TT35). One of the interviewees added that the SFF has brought about 'something even stronger than being part of a team, being part of a community…' (TF35). For this teacher a new bonding had been created with a definitive confidence. The teacher continued '… now that bond will last' (TF35). The same teacher remarked that the role modeling from senior students for junior students had done more for the school than any lecture on bullying. While yet another teacher spoke of the community spirit that presented as a whole school response to the programme:

Teacher Interviewee	Scenario
TL13	…we have class captains and we have class vice captains and there is kind of a debate here an awful lot of the time like what sort of jobs will we give them you know and sometimes lip service is given to it. These guys have a very specific role in the year now and for young guys maybe some who don't play rugby, some who aren't sporty or aren't into the music have that role and have that outlet which is fantastic for their self esteem …it's not just the run of the mill activities that are done in the school for ages, it's a little bit new, it's a little bit different but also it's something that I really want to get across and that is this link that they have with the junior years that other guys don't have and it's just fantastic and it's great for creating this community spirit within the school. 1st years get a great kick out of a 6th year saying 'hello', and saying 'hello' using their name, you know it's not just you're a 1st year, it's calling them by their name and you can see the 1st years going around you know an inch taller after hearing a 6th year taking time out for them so it's really bringing the school together and creating links that we've looked to do for a long time but haven't always been able to master it.

Figure 58

Teacher TL13 above referenced the 'captain' structure and the fact that 'lip service' was often given to similar roles in the school, or that the school had not always mastered the ability to bring the school community together. One hears echoes of the findings from Kay and Francis (1996) who suggest that for some Catholic schools, their 'religious and educational policy does not accurately reflect the religious disposition or needs of the pupils' (1996, p.58). Perhaps the SFF had acted as a programme that gave an authentic scaffolding for the adolescents to 'master it' (TL13) for themselves.

5.21.1 Disaffected Students
An interesting point that referenced disaffected students was raised by two teachers. They noted that some students who had not signed up for anything and were 'disaffected generally' (TC16) became confidently immersed in the SFF programme with 'commitment and enthusiasm' (TC16). The

140

interviewees discussed participants who were captivated by the programme and with echoes of Marcia (1980) noted that such participants had 'committed' to it in a 'responsible' (TC16) manner. The first interviewee (TC16) commented that the programme had offered the disaffected student a strength that assured him that he had done a 'good' job. The second mentioned participants who were not 'natural leaders' (TT75) and that reservations about some of the students who registered for the programme had been voiced. (One is reminded that the SFF programme accepted all students who registered). This teacher went on refer to some students who had registered and to one in particular who 'was on the margins' (TT75).

Teacher Interviewee	TT75
	… one chap in particular I saw him leading the whole 10, his partner wasn't there, he is now in 5th year and he was brilliant, he was so proud when I said it to him because I was so surprised at his involvement and I'm not sure if he has gone on to lead in 5th … year, … I'm not sure he has that leadership but he has spoken to me on a few occasions since about it and my relationship with him.......he comes to me, he greets me, he just seems so proud of what he did...... whether..........he is not a natural leader and I'm not sure that he will fulfil that role but definitely while he was doing it, it really enriched him and enlivened him, he became a different person. He had a huge absentee rate yet he hardly missed, I don't think he missed a Faith Friends event …

Figure 59

The data is significant for all FD programme creators who can see that an active and participative FD programme has the capacity to offer a solid support system to adolescents, especially male adolescents, who may be 'on the margins' or 'disaffected' within their schools. Two other teacher interviewees noted that the groups who became faith friends were always an eclectic mix:

> this programme is one of the very few, …that takes guys from each and every aspect of school … all groups are well represented…you have guys, you know, mixing with guys that they wouldn't, maybe be in their immediate circle (TJ15).

141

Teacher TJ15 also referenced the SFF as a 'unifying' programme and one that anchored TY. Thus as one teacher noted, the participants were offered the 'opportunities to succeed' and added that 'it's just empowering and that in itself, you know it gives confidence' (TO22).

5.21.2 Confidence in Leadership

All interviewees held that the confidence of past-participants in leadership was indeed a lasting and often generative impact from the programme. In every school, the majority of past-participants had continued their leadership roles within the schools. Whether they had become academic or sports captains, leadership gold medal winners, travelled overseas with missionary activities or had been Ember leaders, they had each referenced [in application interviews] their leadership experience in the SFF as having taught them their leadership skills.

The programme placed a strong emphasis on servant leadership. In agreement with the findings of Lavery and Hine (2013), student leadership has a positive impact on Catholic schools. The construct of servant leadership found traction in the participants in terms of their approach to leadership. Many of the interviewees noted that upon interview or registration for a further leadership role the participants regularly referenced their SFF leadership role as a servant leadership role. This is in agreement with Hendrick (2011) who contends that a basic tenet of learning theory is learning by doing. As one interviewee suggested:

| Teacher Interviewee	TT75
	… the fellows who have actually done the Faith Friends Programme who sort of stand out as guys who have given good leadership and good service to the college, so it's not a prerequisite to have done it but those guys are coming to the fore… … I was talking to one of the guys for the Gold Medal Interviews last week from 6th year and he spoke about how what he learned as a leader in faith friends has been able to carry through and he spoke about.............hm he really saw the value of the leadership. …it gave him that opportunity to do some real leadership, not just an artificial way but to actually take a group…

Figure 60

Thus the concept of student servant leadership did echo the findings of Lavery and Hine (2013) who hold that the most appropriate form of student leadership is servant leadership. Their research found

that in Catholic schools, servant leadership prepares 'students to ultimately lead the Church and society in a manner consistent with the Gospel…' (2013, p.63).

5.22 Third Layer of Coding: A Generative Impact

A final layer of coding examined the lasting impact on confidence exhibited by participants in terms of their faith and spirituality. As noted earlier, participation in RE class and school liturgies had become marked and positive. In addition, an added sense of personal confidence in faith and spirituality had emerged for a number of students. This observation concurs with findings from student questionnaires both within the AR cycles and in the LI inquiry. The teachers unanimously held that apart from the SFF offering the confidence and language in faith to many participants, it also offered a confidence in personal faith that proved to have a generative effect. Five teachers (TT75, TL13, TO22, TF35, TJ15) noted that some past SFF participants proceeded to take on further faith development roles in school. This had manifested itself by past-participants becoming Ministers of the Word, Ministers of the Eucharist, pilgrimage helpers and Ember Leaders [5th and 6th year follow-on FD programme]. This generative and lasting impact was of great significance in this research as it appeared to be both personal and public as opposed to personal and private. As I noted earlier in this thesis, Jesus calls all Christians into community. Jesus' call seeks to be answered as a personal and as a free act (Lane 2003) that is lived out with others within a community. As well as role modeling on a pastoral and social level, this group was role modeling on a faith development level. One teacher discusses this point below:

Teacher Interviewee	TO22

Yeah......well I know this year a number of them, those students who took part in the Faith Friends Programme last year and did, they're ministers of the Eucharist; … I think that is just.........if you were to suggest that maybe to year heads or people in advance they wouldn't believe that students in 5th year would willingly........but yet this is the truth of the matter that kids are very much open to these dimensions, …

… those are the very guys equally so that came and wanted to take part in some of the masses with their own peers which is just unbelievable! It's one thing of having just a kinda safety of dealing with young people in the primary sector or let's say 1st years, but to go and act as a minister of the Eucharist with their own peers is just, you know.....................it makes them, it makes them kinda realise that.........hm kind of like to choose maybe the spiritual life, you know because many people can be quite quiet and private however here you can actually be quite public and open about it and it basically says 'that's okay', and it almost gives permission, it allows the people to be..............you know people to be more vocal and more open where previously, in previous times people would have been a lot more quiet and private.............you know even in itself has an underlying message but this one is liberating and freeing and says 'it's okay' and that's where even the students that actually take part in it do see it.........

Figure 61

This impact from the programme is described as 'unbelievable', 'liberating and freeing' (TO22) and echoes the student data. Another teacher interviewee (TJ15) noted that participants who has pursued a role in the Catholic Church, had become resilient towards negative comments with regard to faith. TT75 added that for many participants, the programme had 'validated' and 'made tangible' a Christianity that was 'lived'. One may suggest that the new roles in the Catholic Church, referred to above, added resilience towards the modern culture of negativity and / or apathy towards faith. This was a marked generative and lasting impact from the SFF programme.

The teacher interviews added a significant voice to this study. They corroborated the student findings from the AR cycles as well as Part One of the LI inquiry. The teacher interviews also illustrated significant and whole-school lasting impacts resulting from the SFF programme. It was most interesting to garner this 'outsider' perspective that brought with it fresh and insightful information for professional guidance within the area of adolescent faith development.

Having explored the impact on participants and past-participants, it is evident that a wealth of growth had occurred in the programme participants. The teacher interviews proposed a wider impact, a 'ripple effect' (TJ15) that was not been heretofore considered in the research. It seemed that the annual occurrence of the SFF programme had generated a respect that was broader in impact than was expected from the participants alone. The programme seemed to have had an unexpected positive impact on non-participants as well as on the entire population of all schools. It is proposed that the AR cycles' data analysis together with the past-participants' and the teachers' LI data analysis work to triangulate and validate this research.

5.23 Summary

The second stage of the LI inquiry involved student and teacher interviews. Data analysis proved informative and brought new insights to the study. The student interviews amplified data from previous student questionnaires as well as offering a deeper insight into the student SFF experience. For example, although the 5 R's were re-presented and named in the student interviews, reflective practice stood out as a life skill that was particularity beneficial and had been maintained by some. Interestingly it remained a life skill for one of the participants who at his own suggestion, was continuing to develop his faith. Schön's (1983) model of reflective practice has become an important focus for professional leadership-training programmes, especially in education. One may suggest that this practice can successfully be imparted to adolescents as a life skill to inspire personal development as well as spiritual development. Student Z1W75 shared what he deemed to be an obvious link between reflective practice and prayer.

The language of faith was highlighted by student and teacher interviews as an area in need of support. Despite the examination syllabus and key concepts explored in examination RE that work to support the literacy of RE, there is often a vacuum evident in terms of the fluency of faith for adolescents. The interview data suggested that when practised, the language of faith harvested a confidence to discuss aspects of faith that may not be examination-specific but that were faith-

centred. This point was discussed by the teachers as a significant 'whole school' impact from the SFF.

The LI data signalled that adolescent FD programmes ought to take into consideration the fear of ridicule and 'slagging' as named by student interviewees. This can often inhibit participation and so inhibit growth in faith and self-development. The psychology of adolescence and a new age-and-stage appropriate language of faith ought to form an equal part of the planning and content of any FD programme. Further, the teachers themselves were dubious at the commencement of the programme in their schools and questioned the ability of such a programme to be of benefit given that it could be perceived as 'uncool' (TJ15, TT75). However, this data illustrated that there were several elements of support in the SFF programme to afford each participant an opportunity to grow. Among these elements were the new sensitive-to-gender faith language that was employed in the programme, the servant leadership module and the evident respect gained from adults as well as peers. These and other elements worked in association to override any fear of 'slagging' that may have occurred.

Dovetailing with the first stage of this LI inquiry, a generative lasting impact was flagged by both student and teacher interviewees. The students articulated their desire to continue their faith development through active participation in their local and school faith community, and teachers gave examples of how this desire had manifested itself.

Specifically, the teacher interviews brought new insights to the study. Some teachers named the programme as being the one that captivated 'disaffected' (TC16, TT75, TJ15) students. This impact, although perhaps not proven as a lasting impact, is one that greatly supports the roll out of such an FD programme in a Catholic school. One is again reminded of Groff (1992) who holds that being recognised and respected by adults, peers, and younger youth 'enhances self-esteem and teens' sense of belonging in their community' (1992, p.4). In addition, when belonging was experienced by the participants, it brought with it an '…openness to personal spiritual formation and reflection' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.56).

The teacher interview data unanimously showed that the impact of the programme was indeed lasting and was not confined to the participants. The teacher interviewees all stated that the SFF programme had changed the landscape of RE in their schools. Further, it had changed student participation in school liturgies that were now more meaningful encounters with faith. Participation

146

in the SFF programme had also opened an authentic faith dialogue for senior students in RE class who explored the role and practice of faith in a young person's life. In addition, an unexpected result of the programme was that it seemed to have afforded RE teachers a new level of confidence in their roles with respect to faith development in the RE class and as Religious Educators in Catholic Schools. (Please see Appendix 9 to view all response data from **Part One** and **Part Two** of this study).

Chapter 6:   Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

The primary aim of this research was guided by my conviction that any adolescent who deems himself or herself to be a person of faith, at whatever level that title is embraced (Tuohy and Cairns 2000), is wholly open to the strengthening impact of faith development. The nature of their faith development is imperative. I propose that it incorporates age-and-stage appropriate faith and secular experiences that work to foster relevant and authentic interpersonal relationships. The data analysis showed that to afford adolescents a leadership role from a position of faith invites reciprocal relationships to emerge in their lives. These relationships sparked a cyclical process that allowed a sense of belonging to evolve, which when sustained generated a sense of connectedness. When adolescents who are searching for meaning and values in life were invited to engage with this cyclical process, they very often found traction and purpose that was manifested in an authentic and searching religious faith.

This enquiry set out to explore if the Spiritan Faith Friends Programme had any such impact on the faith development of its participants during the period of the programme and beyond. The particular age group who took part in the programme and the environment in which it occurred were also of particular interest in the research. The SFF programme was offered to TY students during their moratorium year in Spiritan secondary schools.

This research concurs with Fowler (1981) who holds that to have a strengthening and life-giving impact, an FD programme must take cognisance of the psychology of adolescence. The programme sought to embrace belonging as critical to adolescents as they grow and develop. Osterman (2000, p.327) holds that 'being accepted, included, or welcomed leads to positive emotions, such as happiness, elation, contentment, and calm, while being rejected, excluded, or ignored leads to often intense negative feelings of anxiety, depression, grief, jealousy, and loneliness.' The necessity to create constructs where teenagers who search for meaning and values can holistically engage with their search and safely allow this expression to be realised within a faith [as well as secular] context was, therefore, the basis of this research.

In her studies on the spirituality of adolescent males, Engebretson (2004, 2004, 2007) found that teenagers were not only most alive when engaged with their peers, they needed their peers. Thus 'along with self-commitment (connectedness with self), this category of connection with others was

148

of immense importance' (2004, p.274). The SFF programme offered its participants a personal and communal experience of belonging within the Catholic faith community. Data analysis showed that because of the reciprocal relationships that developed, a sense of personal connectedness emerged and became aligned with the communal connectedness (described as being part of something bigger) that was evident. It is suggested that the challenge of baptism to share as well as to nurture faith was immersed in this sense of belonging and connectedness.

The Lasting Impact inquiry added an additional layer to the capacity of the SFF programme. Along with the lasting impacts being discovered, a generative impact was evident. It may be suggested, therefore, that if the cyclical AR process is engaged with, in an earnest, open and self-directed way, adolescent faith can be developed thereby helping to secure the cohesiveness of these future committed members of the Catholic Church.

6.1 Adolescent Voice

The ethical considerations in this research were heightened due to the participants' age group (sixteen to eighteen) and the fact that the context was faith, often perceived as being a private matter. The new paradigm shift in this research, broadly in agreement with Trussell (2008), moves to work on research that is with adolescents as opposed to being on adolescents. As Trussell writes: young people are '…active and competent participants in the research process who are capable of speaking for themselves and shedding light on their own lives' (2008, p.163). In keeping with this paradigm shift and acknowledging that historically adolescents have had little or no voice in the faith development dialogue (Engebretson 2007; Kay and Francis 1996; Kenny 2003), this research worked to promote and to provide an adolescent perspective. The key findings afforded the adolescent voice, (male in this case), a respected place in the FD conversation and may offer valid guidance to facilitators of adolescent faith development programmes.

In addition, the data analysis suggested that professionals who create programmes to nourish adolescent selfhood and confidence on a social level within a secular context may also draw from these findings. The leadership element of the SFF programme proved to have a lasting impact and was a highly effective development tool on many levels. This key finding is in agreement with Lavery and Hine (2013) who hold that developing the servant leadership potential of adolescents is critical since '[s]ociety will always require leaders who are ethical, collaborative, transformative, and have a strong sense of service' (2013, p.41).

6.2 A New Dimension

The research was founded on a positive premise as the programme had previously existed for three years and was perceived as having a supportive impact on participants. The SFF programme was constructed around the well-known 'faith-friends' model of peer ministry while also adding a new dimension. The new dimension was comprised of a training in servant leadership module that was inspired by and rooted in the Gospel. Before the peer-ministry sessions began, the participants took an active part in a series of sessions that focussed on servant leadership from a position of faith. Within the training and discussion each participant's individual value base was aligned with Gospel values and a commitment to independent reflective practice was embraced. Further, confirmation, the final sacrament of initiation into the Catholic Church, was explored and reflected upon anew. During the training sessions, participants were also invited to analyse the concept of blessings in their lives that had arisen from the gift of the Holy Spirit. This could be seen as a challenging invitation for any group of adolescents, including a group who had opted-in to a faith development module. The experience of structured and facilitated peer-sharing in a safe space seemed to be wholly conducive to the process. Having completed the leadership-training sessions, the participants were ready and eager to 'step-up' to an authentic leadership role and further, they were afforded the responsibility and respect to do so.

6.3 Research Questions

This research posed the following questions:

1. How might a Christian peer-ministry programme rooted in the personal act of faith impact on the religious faith development of the adolescent participants?

2. How might the programme connect with adolescents on a religious faith development level during this stage of their development?

3. How might the programme connect with the adolescents' search for meaning within a religious identity?

4. Is the programme considered a faith experience at all?

5. Does the programme offer a sense of belonging to the Christian community by affording the participants the experience of a role in the Catholic Church?

6. Does the denominational setting impact the faith development of the adolescents in any way?

These questions guided the entire research process and were explored throughout the two stages of inquiry: i. An Action Research Inquiry

               ii. A Lasting Impact Inquiry

6.4 Literature

Fowler's (1981) 'Synthetic–Conventional Stage' is the stage of faith viewed in conjunction with this study. As noted above, Fowler (1981) holds that this stage of faith 'typically has its rise and ascendency in adolescence' (1981, p.172). The literature tells us that during this time the peer group and one's interaction within it is vital to developing the selfhood. Of particular importance to this research was the notion that adolescents are predominantly concerned with their interpersonal relationships and describe 'their identity issues mainly in terms of their personal capacity for relationships' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.198). In Fowler's (1981) aptly-named stage of conventional faith, the adolescent takes on the faith system of the local community, and 'in common' with others holds faith only tacitly (if at all) with little ownership or critical reflection. Such faith is synthetic in that it is 'nonanalytical' (Fowler 1981, p.167) but does give a sense of belonging with others. Fowler (1981) holds that during this stage of faith one's self-identity and faith are closely linked with significant others and so if the most important voices in the adolescent conversation are those of peers, 'God', if believed in, is imbued with the interpersonal qualities of a best friend. This theory is amplified in the work of Engebretson (2004, 2006, 2007) whose findings showed that for adolescent males 'God's got your back', summed up their relationship with faith, (2006, p.335).

The present study which is broadly in agreement with Lane's (2003) theory that the specific 'location and labelling' (2004, p.97) of Fowler's (1981) stages of faith ought not be the complete focus of attention, has moved to evaluate the SFF programme as Catholic age-and-stage appropriate content for adolescents. I suggest that some of the aforementioned moments of faith were apparent through the study and, therefore, supported Catholic faith development. Evidence from the data showed earnest engagement with the personal and free act of faith. Some participants had committed to the decision of entering '…into a personal relationship with God' (Lane 2003, p.83). It is necessary to note that when faith development was activated for any particular participant, the moment of faith that he may have been arrived at, was self-directed, a free act, modeled on the leadership of Jesus and enlightened by the catechesis of Confirmation. Further, any faith development that took place was at a communal as well as personal level in that the gift of God's grace in the participants' lives was lived out in accordance with the doctrine of the Church and with the members of the Catholic faith community.

6.4.1 Drift from the Churches

A substantive amount of the literature speaks of a global 'drift from the Churches' (Kay and Francis 1996; Lee and Murdock 1995; Erhard 1999; Engebretson 2004 2006 2007; Kenny 2003; Creasy Dean 2010) that begins in adolescence. The literature suggests that this drift is more pronounced for adolescent males as there seems to be an anomaly present in terms of what is sociologically accepted in terms of masculinity (Santrock 2001; Steinberg 2002). How this is aligned with commitment to a faith community seems to appeal to males who are more in touch with their femininity (Kay and Francis 1996, Kenny 2003). The findings of this research refute this theory due to the impact of a two-part intervention: a servant leadership training module and a nuancing of the language of faith employed that became less feminine (Kay and Francis 1996, Kenny 2003) and more masculine in orientation.

6.4.2 Opportunity

Hryniuk's (2005) 'Creating Space for God' reports that if adolescents are afforded an opportunity to explore their spirituality and faith tradition together with the chance to engage in social justice, this 'has the potential to respond to the deepest needs of young persons for meaning, belonging, and a sense of religious identity' (2005 p.145). Data analysis in this research illustrated a dialogue with this theory. The male participants in the SFF programme were invited to discuss their experience of faith as well as being offered the opportunity to question their faith and to explore their religious identity. From this 'safe' sharing with peers in a tolerant environment, it seems that for some, faith development did indeed take place.

6.5 Summary of Key Findings

Key findings in relation to the research questions are presented from my insider-outsider perspective. The keen sense of belonging and connectedness that emerged from the SFF experience was a key finding that permeated the data. This was articulated by participants from both stages of the inquiry and nestled on the continuum of impacts and lasting impacts from a general confidence and satisfaction at having succeeded in leadership to achieve an authentic articulation of personal growth and / or faith development. An interesting key finding that was corroborated by the teacher interviews is that the belonging and connectedness that evolved from the programme launched out into the wider arena of the schools taking the form of a new fluency in the language of faith and an earnest approach to the dialogue as well as personal and communal practice of faith.

An important key finding suggested that the SFF programme did create a desire from participants to continue their sense of belonging and connectedness on a faith as well as social level. Many participants articulated their intention to build on their servant leadership skills while others decided to embrace an active role in their local and school faith community. I conclude, therefore, that the SFF programme had a generative lasting impact.

Although every participant was not impacted on the same level, the LI inquiry showed that all participants were impacted positively and for many the impact had lasted. Many past-participants noted that they had utilised their leadership skills Post-Programme and wished to continue to do so. Others had built on their faith and had trained for and taken up roles such as Eucharistic Ministers or Ministers of the Word. For those who were specifically impacted on a faith development level, it seemed that the impact served as a launch pad for further growth. This point was evident in LI student interviews. All of the above information was corroborated by the teacher interviews.

Connected to the aforementioned finding (and from the wider perspective of the teachers) was that participation in the SFF programme had led to a lasting impact on school ethos, liturgies, leadership roles and RE as an examination and non-examination subject, especially at senior level. Further, teachers had observed a sense of bonding that had happened between junior and senior students which in their opinion, served to do more for a school than any talks on bullying could ever do (TF21). Another teacher discussed the fact that the bonding which arose Post-Programme was evident daily in the school environs. This teacher added that developing a platform for this kind of 'bonding' had been consistently debated in school but it had been a process they had not been able to 'master' (TL15).

Finally, I argue that the most significant key finding from this study is that the experience of a servant leadership role in the programme appeared to act as a catalyst for faith development. It was found that the leadership role created an attractive scaffold for faith to develop as the adolescent participants could lead and explore faith without fear of ridicule or peer rejection. As noted in the data analysis, the participants rose to the challenge of leadership-in-faith and responded to the responsibility of peer ministry on a personal and communal level. Thus the experience of leadership with the respect and responsibility it encouraged, seems to have caused the participants to engage in and to reflect more readily on the nature of the sacramental content involved in the peer ministry part of the programme.

It may be suggested that this learning by doing (Hendrick 2011) experience caused growth to occur in the participants. Many stated that they experienced growth on a social as well as well as a faith level. The data from this research shows that the impacts from the SFF programme were immediate and also lasted over thirty months post-participation. In addition, the sense of belonging and the subsequent connectedness that emerged, served the participants in a holistic way that was deemed to be strengthening for them.

6.5.1 Key Finding 1: Belonging and Connectedness
The participants in the SFF programme experienced a belonging that gave rise to a sense of connectedness.

Seventy-seven participants out of the ninety-five (81%) who filled in the PPQ felt that they had achieved a sense of belonging in the Catholic Church by their participation in the programme. This was an overall increase of 12% (**Figure 30**). In the LI inquiry the numbers were also significant as 66% of the 5th year and 84% of the 6th year past-participants felt that they belonged to 'something bigger', **(Figure 52**). The participants articulated their sense of belonging and connectedness with clarity of thought and used the present tense to describe its impact on their lives. Many discussed how their sense of belonging and connectedness had continued to impact their lives leading to personal and participative involvement with their local and school community of faith. This was corroborated by the teacher interviews and proved a lasting impact.

Implication: This key finding suggests that when adolescents are invited to be participants in a leadership training and peer ministry faith development programme, a space is created for belonging to develop that in turn invites a sense of connectedness with self and others to emerge. This research found that the aforementioned process was positive, strengthening and served to support participants in their personal development as well as their faith development. Both types of development were deemed relevant and authentic.

6.5.2 Key Finding 2: Leadership Role
Servant leadership training within the SFF programme acted as a catalyst to faith development. It was found that the leadership role created an attractive and authentic platform for faith to be shared and potentially developed as the adolescent participants took on the role with a sense of respect and responsibility as opposed to a fear of ridicule or peer criticism.

The opportunity to take on a servant leadership role within a faith context negated the fear of ridicule, judgement or jeering. This allowed for a first step to be taken in terms of openly discussing and sharing personal faith. The literature shows that peers need and are influenced by each other's voices. The findings showed that the SFF leadership role proved a key factor in facilitating the articulation of these voices in sharing faith. The teacher interviews agreed with this finding by stating that the peer voice continued out into the school both formally and informally. Hence one may suggest that the SFF leadership role acted as a catalyst for a dialogue on faith to begin in a tolerant and inclusive environment. It seems that faith development was given the optimum opportunity to flourish when it was explored within a programme that inspired and facilitated a leadership role. In the words of one teacher interviewee, the programme had 'validated' and 'made tangible' a Christianity that was 'lived'.

Implication: The implication of this finding is that the creation of a leadership role, especially a servant leadership role, is attractive and relevant for adolescents who want to explore their faith and religious identity. As well as inspiring confidence in the process and outside respect for the role, it affords the faith context an authentic platform that is relevant as well as age-and-stage appropriate.

6.5.3 Key Finding 3: Personal Development

Training for a leadership role within the programme seemed to embrace a development of the self. It was found that the servant leadership training together with the sense of belonging and connectedness that ensued, encouraged confidence and growth on a personal as well as social level.

One may suggest that the training for and experience of an authentic leadership role led to some participants who, although were not impacted on a spiritual level, were impacted on a personal and a social level. The participants were fluent in their praise of the programme and its ability to support their leadership, confidence and ability to embrace the SFF experience as a strengthening accomplishment. Evidence of the programme being the 'most valuable' and 'strengthening' programme for participants who were part of the two AR cycles, to having a large impact on confidence, leadership skills and feeling part of something bigger, for those who were part of the LI inquiry. Figure 52 gives an overview of the percentages that show the personal and social impact of the programme from the LI inquiry. One can clearly see that the programme, quite apart from impacting faith development, did impact the participants on a personal and social level at a critical stage of becoming.

Implication: The implication of this finding is that for adolescents, the training for and experience of a leadership role can inspire personal and faith development.

6.5.4 Key Finding 4: Reflective Practice

The experience of ongoing reflective practice proved a significant and supportive tool for adolescent self-development as well as spiritual development.

In the course of the programme, each participant kept a reflective journal. Due to the number of programme features that were explored, it was decided to study the reflective journals (of which there were two hundred and ten) in a separate study. However, the participants referenced the reflective journals of their own volition. During the LI inquiry, past-participants noted that they felt the reflective journal process a supportive one as they dealt with life in general. A past-participant (Z1W75) who named his lasting impact as personal development and faith development, added that he still engaged in reflective practice and felt that it had developed into a natural practice for him. This is significant as the past-participant added that from his current nightly reflective practice flowed a sense of prayer that he now embraced on his own.

Implication: The implication of this finding is that reflective practice ought to be incorporated into adolescent learning. It can serve as a highly effective tool for self-knowledge and the development of emotional intelligence as well as being a pathway towards spiritual growth through prayer.

6.5.5 Key Finding 5: Language of Faith

The belonging and subsequent connectedness that emerged from the programme launched itself into the wider arena of each school. This took the form of a new fluency in the language of faith and a new openness to a youth directed dialogue on faith.

The participants spoke of finding a safe space within the programme sessions to share faith. This finding is in agreement with the literature that noted the peer voice as being of critical importance to adolescents. In this research the peer sharing had impacted those who described a growth in their faith and religious identity. This finding was echoed by the teacher interviews. In addition, it was found that the participants' voices, in dialogue during examination and non-examination senior RE, had impacted on their peers. Their new (TO22, TF35, TL13) language of faith initiated a more informed and student-directed debate to take place. This momentum worked to support school ethos as well as to encourage a wider and more meaningful participation in school liturgies, leadership programmes and meaningful participation RE as an exam and non-exam subject.

Implication: The implication of this finding is that a leadership training and peer ministry faith development programme can have an impact on non-participants as well as participants. It is suggested that the courage to facilitate a FD programme in school can potentially impact on participants and the wider school. It can engage with the Catholic school ethos, RE lesson content and inform pastoral care from the student body at a new and inspiring level.

6.5.6 Key Finding 6: Catholic Ethos

A faith development programme that incorporates the elements of servant leadership and peer ministry can serve the Catholic ethos of a school.

This research showed that teachers were uplifted and positive about the impact the SFF programme had on the school as a whole. Inclusive of the fact that pupils who had been faith friended made up the core of each 1st year group, there was a new 'bonding' and sense of student led pastoral care across the year groups in each school. This support for the ethos came from participants themselves and took the form of 'giving something back' and / or being a 'big brother' as well as requesting a follow on programme while in 6th year (Ember Programme). The support in evidence served to have a 'ripple effect' (TO22) on the rest of the school and was positive and supportive of the Catholic ethos. Further, this finding which is in agreement with Kay and Francis (1996), shows that the SFF programme succeeded at some level to dovetail the rhetoric and the reality, the religious and educational policies of a Catholic school with the actual religious and faith development experience of the student body. This factor and the fact that the programme brought the feeder school closer by association was a support to each school's Catholic ethos.

Implication: The implication of this finding is that when a FD programme is engaged with and respected by the student body whether they participate or not, the Catholic ethos of that school will be impacted in a supportive and authentic way.

6.5.7 Key Finding 7: Catholic School

Catholic schools are a supportive environment for FD programmes that are sacramentally based.

This finding suggests that a Catholic school, while not being the only environment to host a sacramentally based faith development programme, is a supportive one. Schools are very busy places. If one wishes to engage with a FD programme that involves peer ministry with another school, it can be difficult logistically to facilitate such a process. Thus, to have support from management and teachers means that timetables and the physical space must have the capacity to

run the programme. It was decided that if one worked to have the logistics in place, the programme could be rolled out within any environment.

Implication: The implication of this finding is that a sacramental based adolescent FD programme does not require a Catholic school as essential to its roll out. However, such a programme is enhanced and supported when facilitated in a Catholic school.

6.6 Final Conclusion

This research was sparked by the momentum that had grown from the SFF experience in Spiritan schools. The SFF concept was born out of a need to engage students in Spiritan schools with faith development that contributed to and resonated with the Catholic ethos of each school. The programme was in existence three years prior to the formal research that set out to evaluate how and if it impacted the faith development of the male adolescent participants. The research process was encouraged by the Des Places Educational Association (the Spiritan Trust body) and empowered by the management, teaching staff and chaplains in each of the Spiritan schools.

6.6.1 The Research Process

The AR method engaged for the first stage of the inquiry threw up enlightening data. It showed that there was a definitive impact from the programme that supported development of the adolescent male participants on a variety of levels. Some participants illustrated growth on a personal, social and faith level while others showed growth in one or two of these areas. Having formally explored two cycles of the programme and engaged with the data, I followed an instinct that suggested the past-participants and teachers had information to further illuminate the study. Thus a second stage was woven into the methodology and a lasting impact inquiry was set in motion. From this data new and informative findings did emerge. The programme which was open to all TY students of faith and none, provided an individual platform for each participant to develop and flourish in an appreciated, respected, tolerant and safe from ridicule, environment. The input of past-participants and of teachers added valuable data to the ultimate findings of the research. This was in terms of how the impact, in its various guises, had lasted and was in fact growing stronger. Further, the teachers' experience of the programme's impact echoed all participant data and amplified it in terms of an unexpected impact that was on non-participants. This was labelled as a 'the ripple effect' and the embodiment of a living Catholic ethos in their schools.

158

6.6.2 Limitations

A notable limitation of this research is that it was restricted to a self-selected sample of male adolescents. The rationale for this decision was well documented. However, further valuable research in an all-female school as well as in a mixed school would be of great interest. In addition, it would be an advantage to engage with a longitudinal inquiry that followed the past-participants as they progressed to third level education and beyond. The research was carried out in the three Spiritan schools that hosted the SFF programme. This was the entire population who engaged with the programme at that time. This factor can be viewed as a limitation to the inquiry and further research on a larger number of schools may add to the findings.

The LI inquiry stage of the research may have benefitted from additional interviews. The timing was not supportive to past-participants engaging in interviews due to examination preparation. In planning further research this would be taken into consideration. Further, it would be of additional value to interview management in each school.

6.7 End Note

This research finds that being an authentic living person of faith matters greatly to adolescents who search for meaning and values within a religious identity. The SFF programme moves to address the adolescent drift from the Churches (Kay and Francis 1996) and to invite adolescents to experience genuine belonging and connectedness (Karcher and Lee 2002). The data from this research illustrates that the potential of an age-and-stage appropriate FD programme must not be underestimated. It is indeed possible to afford adolescents the sense of belonging and connectedness and a participative relationship within the Catholic faith community that will develop 'a strong sense of affiliation and commitment' (Tuohy and Cairns 2000, p.56). Catechesis 'seeks to provide for those who are believers and those who are searchers or doubters within the faith community' (2010 35). It is incumbent on the adults and elders of the Church to facilitate this 'remarkable' (CT18) moment referenced by Saint John Paul II. We are again reminded that 'Faith is strengthened when it is given to others' RM2. Adolescents need education for spirituality, a fact clearly attested to in the literature (Kay and Francis 1996; Tuohy and Cairns 2000; Engebretson 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007; Creasy Dean 2010). Their spirituality acts a life-giving scaffold that enlightens and encourages each individual and communal voyage towards authentic faith.

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Appendices

Appendix 1a: Plain Language Statement

Title of Study: Believe-Belong -Become:
Evaluating if a Faith Development and Leadership Training
Programme leaves any impact or Lasting-impact on the participants.

Principal Investigator:

Name: **Orla Walsh**

Department: **Faith Development Officer**

Address: **Spiritan Educational Trust (DEA), Kimmage Manor, Whitehall Rd, Dublin 12**

Phone: **087 9182352**

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Plain Language Statement

You have opted to take part in an evaluative piece of research that wishes to explore if the SFF programme had any long-term impact on the students who took part in it in your schoool. I invite you to complete this qualitative survey in order to add to research on this programme.

Before you decide to participate in this research, it is important that you understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this evaluative study is to explore and analyse if the Faith Development and Leadership Training Programme (SFF) had any long-term impact on the students. The research is designed to observe and examine the type of long-term (if any) impact (if any) that the programme had in order to try and make recommendations that may improve the programme.

Also, if you opt to take part in the research you may be invited to take part in an individual interview or a Focus Group Interview. You are free to opt in or opt out of the invitation to take part in any of this research.

Risks: there are no risks involved with this study. You may decline to answer any or all questions and if you choose you may terminate your involvement at any time.

Benefits: There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, it is hoped that the information obtained from this study may improve the Faith Development and Leadership Training programme as it is analysed and examined. Your opinions and experience as an adolescent who is participating in the programme are valuable to Catholic education.

Alternative Procedures:

If you do not want to be in the study, you may choose not to participate and leave your answers to the questionnaires blank and therefore not attend any interview.

Confidentiality:

For the purposes of this research your comments will be confidential. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all researcher notes and documents.

Notes, interview transcriptions, and transcribed notes and any other identifying participant information will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher's office. All soft copy data will be held on a laptop with an encrypted password protecting it. When no longer necessary for research and legal obligation to hold on to it, all materials will be shredded and destroyed.

The researcher will review the collected data. Information from this research will be used solely for the purpose of this study and any publications that may result from this study. Participants involved in this study will **not** be identified and their **confidentiality will be maintained**.

The researcher will conduct an Individual Interview or a Focus Group Interview (FGI) with participants **who opt to take part in the research process**. She would like to audio record this FGI in order to help coding and analysis of the data. This recording will be confidential and will only be used in her personal database and only available to her supervisor upon request. The questions will

be about the long-term impact of the SFF programme and the students' participation in it. If you do not wish to take part in this part of the data gathering that is completely acceptable.

Each participant in the Interview or FGI has the opportunity to obtain a transcribed copy of their interview. Participants should tell the researcher if a copy of the interview is desired.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents.

Person to Contact:

Should you have any questions about the research or any related matters, please contact the researcher at orla.walsh@desplaces.ie

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Appendix 1b: Informed Letter of Consent

Title of Study: Believe-Belong -Become:

Evaluating if a Faith Development and Leadership Training Programme leaves any Long-term impact on the participants.

You are being invited to take part in a proposed research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyse if the Faith Development and Leadership Training Programme for Transition year students had any long-term impact on students in your school. There are no right or wrong conclusions to this question. The research is designed to observe and examine the type of impact (if any) that the programme had and to try and make recommendations in order to improve the programme.

If you opt to take part in the research you will be invited to complete a questionnaire. You may also be invited to take part in an individual Interview or a Focus Group Interview. You are free to opt in or opt out of the invitation to take part in the questionnaire or the Interviews.

Voluntary Participation:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You are free to not answer any question or questions if you choose. This will not affect the relationship you have with the researcher.

Unforeseeable Risks:

There may be risks that are not anticipated. However there have been no risks of any kind to previous programme participants. Every effort will be made to negate any risks. There will be a school chaplain and councillor available at all times.

Costs to Subject:

There are no costs to you for your participation in this study

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation to you for your participation in this study.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)	Yes/No
I understand the information provided	Yes/No
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	Yes/No
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	Yes/No
I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped	Yes/No

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Consent:

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Signature of Participant

_____   Date _____

Appendix 2: Copy of Pre-Programme Questionnaire (PQ) Action Research Year 1

1. Is faith an important part of your life? Please explain your answer.
2. What is your understanding of the word 'Spirituality'?
3. Do you have a role in the Catholic Church? If yes, please explain why you think this is so. If no, please explain why you think this is so.
4. You have a sense of belonging in many groups, clubs and communities; do you have a sense of belonging in the Catholic Church? Why? / Why not?
5. How did you hear about the Spiritan Faith Friends programme?
6. What are your expectations of the Spiritan Faith Friends Programme? What do you hope to get out of it?
7. What do you think you can bring to the Spiritan Faith Friends Programme?
8. Why do you think you registered to take part in a faith programme like this one?

Appendix 3: Copy of Pre-Programme Questionnaire (PQ) Action Research Year 2

1. In your opinion, what does the word 'Faith' mean to you?
2. In agreement with the above understanding of the word 'faith', is faith an important part of your life?
3. Please explain your answer to the previous question.
4. In your opinion what does 'spirituality' and/or 'a sense of spirituality' mean?
5. In your opinion do you have a spirituality or a sense of spirituality?
6. Please explain your answer to the previous question.
7. In your opinion where does your sense of spirituality come from?
8. Please explain your answer to the previous question
9. You have a sense of belonging in many groups, clubs and communities; do you have a sense of belonging in your faith community?
10. Please explain your answer to the previous question.
11. Do you feel that you have a role in your faith community?
12. Please explain your answer to the previous question.
13. Do you feel a sense of connectedness in your faith community?
14. Please explain your answer to the previous question.
15. Why do you want to take part in this programme?
16. Do you have any hopes in terms of your own faith and this programme?
17. Please explain your answer to the previous question.

Appendix 4: Copy of Post-Programme Questionnaire (PPQ) Action Research Year 1 and Year 2

1. Over the course of the Spiritan Faith Friends programme has your faith become more important or less important to you?

   1a. Please try to explain your answer.

2. In your opinion, has your understanding of the word 'Spirituality' altered in any way?

   2a. Please try to explain your answer.

3. Do you think that Spiritan Faith Friends programme did or did not offer you a role in the Catholic Church?

   3a. Please try to explain your answer.

4. Did the Spiritan Faith Friends programme give you a sense of belonging in the Catholic Church?

   4a. Please try to explain your answer

5. Would you describe the Spiritan Faith Friends programme as a faith experience?

   5a. Please try to explain your answer.

6. What was the most enjoyable part of your SFF experience? Please explain your answer.

7. What was the best skill/learning that you have had during the Spiritan Faith Friends programme? Please explain your answer.

8. Would you recommend this programme to others?

   8a. Please give a reason for your answer.

9. What would you like to see more of in the SFF programme?

Appendix 5: Copy of Focus Group Questions

1. Tell me about your programme experience…

2. How has the Programme impacted on your Transition Year?

3. Think over the programme, what went particularly well for you?

4. How did you feel about the programme?

5. If you were inviting a TY to get involved next year, what would you say?

6. What change or changes would you make to the programme?

Tell me more about…
Can you explain what?…
Would you give an example?...

For the dominant participant try: "You've made some very good points. Thank you… I'm interested in what other members of the group might want to add. Who else has something to say?"

For the reticent participant try: "Let's open the conversation out a little.   -------, what has occurred to you during the conversation?

Appendix 6: Year 1 and Year 2 Copy of Lasting Impact *Pilot* Questionnaire

1. Can you remember how you felt about being a Spiritan Faith Friend?
2. Did the Programme help you feel that you belonged to 'something bigger'?
3. If your answer is 'yes' can you please try to describe the 'something bigger'?
4. Did the programme have any impact on you in general?
5. Please explain your answer...
6. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your leadership?
7. Please explain your answer and if you have any, please give examples.
8. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and/or faith?
9. Please explain your answer...
10. Did the programme have any impact and /or lasting impact on your confidence?
11. Please explain your answer...
12. Did the programme make you stronger in any way?
13. Please explain your answer...

Appendix 7: Copy of Lasting-impact *Final* Questionnaire

1. Can you remember how you felt about being a Spiritan Faith Friend?
2. Did the Programme have any impact on you in general?
3. Please try to explain your answer...
4. Did the Programme have any impact and/or lasting impact on your confidence?
5. Please explain your answer...
6. Did the programme help you feel that you belonged to something bigger?
7. If your answer is 'yes' can you please take a few minutes to think about this and try to describe the 'something bigger'?
8. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your leadership ability?
9. Please explain your answer and if you can, please give examples.
10. Did the programme have any lasting impact on your Spirituality and/ or faith?
11. Please take a minute to think about this and please try to explain your answer…
12. Did the programme cause you to feel stronger mentally and/or spiritually?
13. Please take a minute to think about this and please try to explain your answer…

Appendix 8: Copy of Interview Questions for Past-Participants and Teachers

1. What are your thoughts on the SFF programme?

2. Students said that the programme helped them feel part of 'something bigger' and gave examples of feeling part of team, the Church or just a different group in their year, what are your thoughts on this?

3. Students said that the programme had an impact on them and had an impact on their leadership. What are your thoughts on this?

4. A group of students agreed that the programme had a lasting impact on their Spirituality and/ or faith. What are your thoughts on this?

5. A large majority of students agreed that the programme had an impact and/or lasting impact on their confidence. Have you any comment on that from your perspective?

6. What are your thoughts on the Catholic School environment for the programme?

Appendix 9: The Spiritan Faith Friends Programme Contents Page

Servant Leadership Sessions

Bright Sparks

Session 1: Introduction

Session 2: Reflective Practice

Fanning the Flame

Session 3: Leadership

Session 4: Mentoring and Jesus as Leader

Hearts Ablaze

Session 5: Vision and Values

Session 6: The 'E's of Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

Unforgettable Fire

Session 7: The Sacrament of Confirmation

Session 8: The Sacrament of Confirmation/Peer Ministry

Peer Ministry Sessions

Session 1: Setting the Pace

Part 1: Introduction

Part 2: Starter Charter

Part 3: Setting the Pace Game

Part 4: Ordinary and Extraordinary Times

Part 5: Time for Scripture

Part 6: Prayer Time

Session 2: Companions on the Trail

Part 7: Get Myself Connected

Part 8: Come Together, Right Now …

Part 9: Believe

Part 10: I Set My Heart On …

Part 11: My Beliefs

Session 3: Refuelling

Part 12: My Talent

Part 13: Pentecost

Part 14: Pentecost

Part 15: Gift of the Holy Spirit

Part 16: Blessings

Part 17: Blessings from the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Session 4: Gaining Ground

Part 18: Patron Saints

Part 19: What's in a Name?

Part 20: Confirmation Name

Part 21: Confirmation Time

Session 5: Handing on the Baton

Part 22: Blessings

Part 23: It's Confirmed – You are a Full ad Active Member

Prayer Sessions

Week One

Theme: Setting the Pace

Week Two

Theme: Companions on the Trail

Week Three

Theme: Refuelling

Week Four

Theme: Gaining Ground

Week Five

Theme: Handing on the Baton