

## Social issues study guide survey Oct/Nov 2009

In October and November 2009 a total of 93 parishes, almost one quarter of all Presbyterian and Uniting parishes, took part in the social issues study guides survey. Parishes were asked if the study guides were being used by congregations and if so how are they being used. Below is a summary of the survey results.

### **Survey results:**

**More than half of the parishes surveyed are using the study guides (59%)** and an additional 11% identified as "I do not know if they are used" may or may not be using the guides. 13% of parishes surveyed said they are not using the study guides.

The survey showed that **distribution of the study guides is effective**. 83 out of the 93 parishes surveyed received all of the six study guides (89%).

**75% of parishes surveyed are satisfied with the number of booklets they receive** (8 copies per mail out) and **80% of parishes surveyed were satisfied with four study guides** being produced each year.

The study guides were originally designed for home and church study group use and they are meeting this need with **29% of parishes surveyed responding that the guides are used in church study groups**, in home groups 26%, for individual study 26%, and 14% said they are used by ministers as sermon themes.

Parishes surveyed were asked to nominate the study guide that had been most helpful to their church. There was good recall on both titles and content. **30% of surveyed parishes said that *Caring for Creation* was the most helpful study guide produced to date** and parish comments supporting the publication reflected this. The next most helpful guide was *Coming of Age* 17%, then *Caring for our Children* and *Giving and Getting* (only recently sent to parishes) both 13%, then *House to Home* and *Connecting with Young People* both 11%.

**When asked if there was anything about the study guides that should be changed almost half of surveyed parishes responded "no" (45%) and 23% responded "yes".**

The **most common feedback received** from surveyed parishes was: 31 surveyed parishes (**33%**) **said they were pleased with size, layout, content and quality of the study guides**; 11 surveyed parishes (**12%**) **said *Caring for Creation* was popular**, topical, though-provoking, a catalyst for discussion and well-used by congregations; 9 surveyed parishes (**10%**) **asked for the text in future study guides to be dark in colour**.

Parishes surveyed were asked to suggest topics of interest to their congregations for future study guides, a total of **85 were suggested**, the **two most popular were bioethics and race relations**.

**In response to feedback received, text in all future study guides will be dark in colour and bioethics and race relations will be study guide topics in 2010.**

### ***About the social issues study guide survey:***

- A total of 93 parishes, almost one quarter of all Presbyterian and Uniting parishes (22%), took part in the social issues survey during October and November 2009.
- The survey was sent by mail (with the *Getting and Giving* study guide), with stamped addressed return envelope, to 416 parishes, and 48 parishes returned completed surveys (12%). Some parishes did not answer all questions.
- For the phone survey a part-time staff member contacted 80 parishes (selected at random from the *Year Book*) and 45 agreed to take part (56%). To avoid doubling up, parishes taking part in the phone survey were asked not to participate in the mailed survey.