

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, APPLICATION

Mind the Gap

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My family heard this incessant reminder as we rode the Underground in London a few years back. That broadcast message told us always to be aware of “the gap”, and to subsequently manage that gap between the rail car and the station’s platform wisely and safely. We discovered that when exiting London’s Underground, the best way to manage the gap was to take a big leap over it!

Like the gap between the rail car and platform, we often find gaps when we analyze data. More specifically, when comparing two sets of data, such as demographic data from neighborhoods where our parishes are located and that of our parishioners, gaps or differences in these profiles may exist.

We need to become aware and mindful of these data gaps, or demographic differences and manage them wisely. Unfortunately, with data, it’s not the best practice to “leap over” these gaps. Instead, it’s a chance to explore the data further and see what opportunities there are to manage them.

MissionInsite provides a wealth of data, charts, and maps to help guide you in evaluating a current snapshot of your parish and the neighborhood it serves. The Office of Missionary Planning and Leadership is available to help you, not only in identifying gaps in profile data from these reports, but also in understanding them better.

Here are a few simple steps to get you started with your analysis:

1. Decide which MissionInsite reports will give you the most relevant information for your analysis
2. Learn how to read and interpret those “Big Data” reports and maps
3. Identify key demographic categories and data gaps between your profiles in these categories
4. Evaluate significant trends in those key demographic categories

I can walk with you, through any or all of these steps! Understanding and analyzing data and realizing the significance of gaps in your data comparisons are key. This type of data analysis can help identify opportunities for your parish to explore. In future issues of *Missionary Leader*

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Update, I will focus on some of the key demographic categories from MissionInsite reports, and show how to evaluate that data.

Let me know how I can help and support you through your data analysis. I can provide assistance in reading and interpreting the data, and guidance in identifying key data comparison gaps.

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