



GRACEWORKS MINISTRIES

Frequently Asked Questions About the Christian School Comprehensive Survey

How many families or students do you need to make the survey meaningful?

This boils down to 2 separate issues: (1) Response rates, and (2) Minimum numbers for the scoring software to work.

For response rates, the goal is 40 to 60% of all parents. If you are a smaller school, your goal should be the 60%, larger schools 40%. Note that we do ask both moms and dads. If only mom or dad responds, our goal would be 60% of all families where at least one parent responded. Note that we would rather keep the survey open and push for more responses than close it prematurely and question the results.

For very large schools, after 300 parents respond, statistics tell us that survey #301 is not likely to tell us anything we don't already know. However, the assumption here is that the 300 evenly represent all grades and divisions of the school

For fairly small schools, response rates of 60% are needed. Plus, the minimum number of parents responding should be at least 30, but this is less than ideal. This will provide you with the key overall statistics, including program elements most predictive of satisfaction. To get grade level data, we need at least 10 respondents per grade. Note that respondents with children in multiple grades count towards the 10 in each one of their child's grades.

All of the above can indicate that your school is too small to benefit from the Christian School Comprehensive Survey. If you are not sure, contact us (719)278-9600, ext. 300 and we will work it through.

The science here is no different for any other constituent group. It should be a given that teachers and students should participate at 80-90%. Have students complete the survey at school, and teachers can always be anonymous. If you are looking for a more scientific view of your alumni, another incentive will be necessary to get reasonable response (e.g. drawing for gift cards.)

Note that we are working on a coupon incentive system for fall, 2023 that will daily send your secretary ready to print "coupons" to boost parent response. These incentives can be free – a dress down or a daily assignment homework pass. The coupons are given out to students at the end of each school day. If a student has not received a coupon, you can imagine the topic of conversation when Mom or Dad picks them up. *Students bugging parents works wonders.*

What are the mechanics of how the survey is delivered?

The Christian School Comprehensive Survey is a controlled survey. Each participant receives a unique 10-number ID, which we call a token. Practically all schools send us the email addresses of recipients, and we do the merge and send out the school-approved email with survey-taking instructions. We even send weekly reminders to everyone who still hasn't taken the survey. Emails are deleted from our system after the survey closes.

A few schools will send the emails themselves. In this case, we send you the token numbers, you generate the email merge, and send reminders.

Note that we put the token system to good use when we score the survey. We provide you lists of names of parents and others who are promoters, or potential volunteers, or leaving you (with reason.)

Note that while we send the survey, the return address and logo and signature are all yours. This improves response rate.

Can we add people after the survey has started? YES. We give you a list of unused tokens which you can assign as need be. You simply inform the new person of their survey-taking number.

How is the Christian School Comprehensive Survey confidential?

At the beginning of the survey, each respondent is told their responses to the survey are confidential if they wish them to be. There are two common-sense exceptions to this: (1) We let the school know if they completed a survey, and (2) We report back anything they are interested in volunteering for. In contrast to non-confidential respondents, token ID numbers are dropped off of all reports. Token numbers are also stripped out of your dataset that is part of the Excel-based final report. There are no exceptions to this policy no matter what. *Confidentiality is completely in the control of the respondent.*

If GraceWorks sends out the survey taking emails, what does our school do?

At the beginning, you make sure your constituents know it is coming. You should also send out blanket reminders weekly. There is a lot more you can do – we have entire document on incentives, which you receive when you order the survey.

Who gets the Christian School Comprehensive Survey?

In short, every constituent group, including students (4th grade and up), school staff, even donors and alumni. Keep in mind that because it's electronic, *the survey turns questions on and off based on who is answering.* For example, we don't ask past parents to rate program elements – they simply wouldn't know. Note that student responses are segregated from overall responses, to provide apples to apples comparisons with other Christian schools.

The main benefit of surveying outside of parents, teachers, and students is that you pick up more Promoters and more volunteers. For most schools, it's more about finding people who can help you rather than accurate science.

How long do you leave the survey open?

Generally, 3 weeks, with the possibility of a 4th if response rates are not adequate.

How do we know who has or has not taken the survey as it progresses? As part of the onboarding process, we provide your school a unique link to download weekly progress reports. The progress reports tell you who has completed the survey, and who has not.

How long does it take to complete a CSCS survey?

Keep in mind that there are two open-ended questions in the survey, and potentially more for specific situations. (E.g., What are the major considerations in your decision to not enroll next year?) The estimates below include 5 minutes for open-ended questions, which may be too high or too low depending on the person.

Since questions are turned on and off, the longest survey taking-time is for persons answering the program element questions: Current parents, teachers, volunteers, and board members. Their survey will take about 15 minutes. (Note that these questions are only asked one time, even if multiple categories apply.) If you are an alum, a set of Barna-like questions takes about 5 minutes more. Students answer a subset of program element questions, so their survey takes about six minutes – and should be taken at the school, in class. For everyone else, the survey takes 2-3 minutes, unless you add a significant number of custom questions.

These survey times have been true with some version of this survey since 2010, and over 150,000 constituents have responded, including about 90,000 parents. Longer surveys work because people hold their child's Christian school in such high regard.

How long until we get the results?

Typically within a week of the close of the survey – a few days longer in our busiest times. Our scoring software is highly evolved – there is very little scoring by hand. We schedule the final debrief to be slightly after when you receive the final report.

Who sees the results of our survey?

Only the people you have permitted. This is an explicit decision by you during the onboarding process. Results are not shared with anyone else. Likewise all names and emails are deleted shortly after the close of the survey. Note that we do match up names but not emails on various tabs of the Excel Companion Report of the CSCS.

Who do we contact for any questions or issues during the survey?

Contact our Survey Customer Service Representative, Elisabeth O'Neill at elisabeth@graceworksministries.org, or (719)278-9600, ext. 300.

How do we order the survey?

Go to <https://graceworksministries.org/christian-school-survey/>, or contact Elisabeth O'Neill at elisabeth@graceworksministries.org or (719)278-9600, ext. 100. Elisabeth can also invoice you if you are purchasing with check.