

Sanctuary Seating Capacity versus Parish Size For Parishes in The Archdiocese of Atlanta

Estimating the necessary seating capacity for a parish sanctuary is not easy because of the multiple masses, the potentially different audiences and languages, and probability of church attendance on any Sunday. To help, we have taken the data from the recent pastor, deacon and priest survey to get a sense of how many seats are needed on average per family in a parish. We used the survey data from parishes that reported that none of their normal weekend masses exceeded seating capacity and those that only one weekend mass exceeded capacity. Based on the averages, it appears that somewhere between 2.4 and 3.5 families per sanctuary seat is a good “Rule of Thumb”. But as the graphs below show, there can be lots of variation.

Seating Capacity versus Families (per Survey)						
Parishes Reporting	Average Number of Families			Average Sanctuary Seating Capacity	Average Number of Families per Seat	
	Registered	Unregistered	Total		Registered	Total
No masses exceed capacity	975	275	1250	523	1.9	2.4
One mass exceeds capacity	1428	381	1809	518	2.8	3.5

