

# Latter-day Saint Trends in the United States

Religiousness, Well-Being, and Retention



**W. Justin Dyer, PhD**

**Jenet J. Erickson, PhD**

**Sam A. Hardy, PhD**

**Barbara Morgan Gardner, PhD**

**David C. Dollahite, PhD**

**BYU, Religious Education**

**BYU, Religious Education**

**BYU, Psychology**

**BYU, Religious Education**

**BYU, School of Family Life**



## Key Findings at a Glance

- ▶ **Highest religious activity in America.** Seventy-six percent of Latter-day Saint Millennials and Gen Z attend church at least monthly—more than any other major US religion. Eighty percent of Latter-day Saint parents pray and/or read scripture with their children, also the highest.
- ▶ **Strong well-being, even among the youngest generation.** Latter-day Saints rank among the very highest in feeling “deep spiritual peace” and being “very happy with life.”
- ▶ **The highest active retention in the country.** Forty-two percent of those raised Latter-day Saint still identify as such and attend monthly as adults—the highest active-retention rate of any religion. Among Millennial+ Christians, only Adventists retain active members at a higher rate.
- ▶ **Some data suggest retention has declined, a trend similar to that seen in other religions.** The current retention rate is ~50%, down from 82% in the 1980s. This is higher than other Christian denominations except Catholics and Orthodox Christians.
- ▶ **Two factors stand out as the strongest predictors of leaving.** Among Latter-day Saint youth, not feeling God’s presence in daily life and political ideology were the most significant predictors of deidentifying in their early 20s—a pattern seen across US religions today.
- ▶ **Most who leave still value faith.** Of those who deidentify, 54% still consider religion or spirituality important, and roughly 2 in 3 leave open the possibility of returning.

Copyright © June 2026 by Brigham Young University. All rights reserved.

This material is neither made, provided, approved, nor endorsed by Intellectual Reserve, Inc., or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Any content or opinions expressed, implied, or included in or with the material are solely those of the owners and not those of Intellectual Reserve, Inc., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young University, or BYU Studies.

No part of this booklet may be reprinted, reproduced, utilized in any form or by any electronic, digital, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording or in an information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published by BYU Studies, 1063 JFSB, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 84602; <https://byustudies.byu.edu>

Cover photo © IRI.

This report was edited by Matthew B. Christensen, Katie Lewis, and Abigail W. Tree, with assistance from interns Anna Eastmond and Kaitlyn Pack. It was designed and typeset by Marny K. Parkin.

### Suggested citation:

APA: Dyer, W. J., Erickson, J. J., Hardy, S. A., Gardner, B. M., & Dollahite, D. C. (2026). *Latter-day Saint trends in the United States: Religiousness, well-being, and retention*. BYU Studies.

Chicago: Dyer, W. Justin, Jenet J. Erickson, Sam A. Hardy, Barbara Morgan Gardner, and David C. Dollahite. *Latter-day Saint Trends in the United States: Religiousness, Well-Being, and Retention*. BYU Studies, 2026.

## Executive Summary

---

This report draws on multiple large datasets to explore the religiousness, well-being, and retention of Latter-day Saints. Despite broader trends of religious disengagement that have lowered overall church retention over the past forty years, this report arrives at a time of growth for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and strong engagement in the Church Educational System. With more and more individuals disengaging with institutions across the board, religious institutions have not been spared (though disengagement has recently leveled off). Yet data show Latter-day Saints have relatively high levels of religiousness, well-being, and retention even as the United States has experienced a general decline in religious activity. According to the Pew Religious Landscape Study (2024; survey of the United States), Latter-day Saints have the highest rate of church attendance of any major religious group and the highest rates of personal scripture reading and parents praying and/or reading scriptures with their children. Latter-day Saints are also among the highest in their sense of well-being, indicating high levels of feeling “a deep sense of spiritual peace and well-being” and being “very happy with life.” These trends hold for Latter-day Saint Millennial+ (combining Millennials and Gen Z) who are also highly involved in their religion.

The Pew Religious Landscape Study (2024) and the Spiritual Seismology Survey (2025) were used to examine trends of Latter-day Saint retention in the United States. In these surveys, “retention” was defined as the percentage of those raised Latter-day Saint who continue to identify as Latter-day Saint in adulthood. Based on these two surveys, the retention rate today is approximately 50%. This rate is higher than all other Christian denominations except Catholics and Orthodox Christians, who have a slightly higher rate. However, when examining those who were raised in a religion and actively participate in that religion as adults (attending religious services at least monthly), Latter-day Saints have the highest percentage of “active”

retention of all religions at 42%. Compared with other faiths, few Latter-day Saints are “nominal” members—that is, members who identify as a Latter-day Saint but rarely attend religious services. Latter-day Saints today are also much less likely to be nominal members than in the past, which likely impacts trends of deidentification over the last several decades.

Some data suggest that in the 1980s, Latter-day Saint retention rate was 82%, but it dropped to 58% by the 2000s (General Social Survey data). From the 2010s to the present, the rate is 46%. Millennial+ had the greatest drop from just over 60% retention in the 2000s to just above 40% retention in the 2010s to today. Although retention may have decreased, given high conversion and birth rates, it is not unexpected that overall membership continues to grow. Further, even with the decline in retention, Latter-day Saints are one of the least likely religious groups to lose Millennial+ members. In terms of identifying as a Latter-day Saint and also regularly attending church, Latter-day Saints are retaining active Millennial+ members at a higher rate than all other Christian denominations except Adventists.

The Family Foundations of Youth Development (2016–2024) data were used to examine what factors during the mid-teen years predicted deidentifying from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the later-teen years and the early twenties. The most significant predictors of deidentifying included political identification and not feeling God’s presence daily. This relationship between political ideology and religious retention is consistent across religions in the United States today. Digital media use, youth cellphone ownership, and time spent watching video clips also related to lower retention for Latter-day Saints.

Many of those who deidentify, however, continue to be religious, and some return to religion. Using the Spiritual Seismology Survey data, of those raised Latter-day Saint

who no longer identified as Latter-day Saint in adulthood, one-third switched to another Christian denomination, another third identified as “nothing in particular,” and one-fourth identified as Atheist/Agnostic. Further, statistical analyses indicated four groups of former Latter-day Saints based on their feelings about the importance of religion and spirituality, their warmth toward Latter-day Saints, and their religious beliefs. Two of the groups, “Faith Staying” (22%) and “Faith Bordering” (32%), continued to feel religion was an important part of their lives and had relatively warm feelings toward Latter-day Saints. The other two groups, “Faith Distancing” (36%) and “Faith Leaving” (10%), indicated religion was not at all important to them.

The dramatic shift in religious identification in the United States, with historically high rates of people deidentifying from the religion they were raised in, also appears to influence members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Not feeling God’s presence in one’s life and political ideology appear to be important predictors of deidentification.

Although retention is not as high as it once was, Latter-day Saints remain in a remarkably strong position across every major indicator of religious life. They lead the nation in church attendance, personal and family religious practice, and active retention, including among Millennials and Gen Z. They also report some of the highest levels of spiritual peace and well-being, and very few remain only nominally affiliated.

---

## About the Authors

---

**W. Justin Dyer** is Professor of Religious Education at BYU. His research focuses on the impact of religion on well-being, particularly for Latter-day Saints. He is the principal investigator of the Family Foundations of Youth Development project, a ten-year study on the well-being and religion/spirituality of Gen Z youth. He currently serves as the editor-in-chief of BYU Studies.

**Jenet Jacob Erickson** is Associate Professor of Religious Education at BYU. Her research focuses on the well-being of women in the contexts of religious faith and work and family life.

**Sam A. Hardy** is Professor in the Department of Psychology at Brigham Young University. He has a PhD in developmental psychology from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. His research focuses on religious development in adolescence and young adulthood.

**Barbara Morgan Gardner** is Professor in Religious Education at BYU. Her research focuses on women and religious experiences and leadership, international religious education, and impact of LDS doctrine. She is a chaplain of higher education.

**David C. Dollahite** is Professor of Family Life at Brigham Young University and Codirector (with Loren Marks) of the American Families of Faith project. He has more than two hundred publications for scholarly and public audiences including: *Psychology of Religion and Families* (Routledge, 2026) and *Home-Centered Gospel Learning and Living* (BYU Religious Studies Center; Deseret Book 2022).

*Inquiries about this report can be directed to Justin Dyer at [justindyer@byu.edu](mailto:justindyer@byu.edu).*

## Introduction

---

Amidst today’s rapidly changing religious landscape, this report examines the religiousness, well-being, and retention of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the United States, making comparisons across religions and generations. This allows us to examine Latter-day Saints relative to other faiths and the extent to which broader cultural changes in religiousness have shaped younger generations relative to older generations. We specifically address the following questions: What is going on with Latter-day Saints in their religiousness, well-being, and retention? How do they compare with those of other faiths? How do the two youngest generations of Latter-day Saints (Millennials, born 1981–1996, and Gen Z, born 1997–2012)<sup>1</sup> compare with those of other faiths and with previous generations?

Today’s shifting religious landscape is part of the transformation of the overall social landscape. In 2000, Robert Putnam noted decreased participation in nearly all institutions since the mid-twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Updating this work over two decades later, Putnam found the same trends continuing to 2020.<sup>3</sup> As he put it, after the 1960s, “virtually all our measures show a steady, unremitting decline in social connectedness over the last half century.”<sup>4</sup> A recent Pew Research Center study found that the proportion of individuals in the United States not identifying as religious increased from 16% in 2007 to 29% in 2024.<sup>5</sup> Yet, there are some indications that the

increase in the percentages of those with no religious affiliation has leveled off and the percentage may even be decreasing.<sup>6</sup>

Declines in spiritual beliefs have not been as dramatic as declines in religious affiliation. As Smith argues, “while traditional religion has declined in the United States, it has not been replaced by sheer secularism.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, although older generations are substantially more “traditionally religious” than younger generations (for example, affiliating with a religion or attending religious services), there is a relatively small gap between generations on other measures of spirituality, such as believing people have a spirit or that there is a spiritual nature to the world.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time as these societal changes, recent reports on The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints indicate global increases in convert baptisms, congregational units, temples, and Church Educational System enrollment (including in the United States).<sup>9</sup> The purpose of this report is to examine additional US trends in Latter-day Saint religiousness, well-being, and retention across time and generations and compare those trends to

---

*Christianity in the U.S. Has Slowed, May Have Leveled Off: Findings from the 2023–24 Religious Landscape Study* (Pew Research Center, 2025), 80, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/02/26/decline-of-christianity-in-the-us-has-slowed-may-have-leveled-off/>.

6. Ryan P. Burge, *The Vanishing Church: How the Hollowing Out of Moderate Congregations Is Hurting Democracy, Faith, and Us* (Brazos Press, 2026), 74.

7. Christian Smith, *Why Religion Went Obsolete: The Demise of Traditional Faith in America* (Oxford University Press, 2025), 368.

8. Smith and others, *Decline of Christianity*, 18–19.

9. Quentin L. Cook, “The Lord Is Hastening His Work,” *Liahona*, November 2025, 47–50; Scott Taylor, “2024 Statistical Report of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *Church News*, April 5, 2025, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/general-conference/2025/04/05/april-2025-church-statistical-report-2024/>; “The Growth and Momentum of the Church Educational System,” Newsroom, September 25, 2023, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/growth-momentum-church-educational-system>.

---

1. In analyses below, we will often combine Millennials and Gen Z. We refer to them as “Millennial+.”

2. Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster, 2000), 65–72.

3. Robert D. Putnam with Shaylyn Romney Garrett, “Society: Between Isolation and Solidarity,” in *The Upswing: How America Came Together a Century Ago and How We Can Do It Again* (Simon & Schuster, 2020), 109–62.

4. Putnam and Garrett, *Upswing*, 162.

5. Gregory A. Smith, Alan Cooperman, Becka A. Alper, Besheer Mohamed, Chip Rotolo, Patricia Tevington, and others, *Decline of*

those of other faiths. In doing so, we discuss Latter-day Saints today in the context of previous decades as well as the broader current religious landscape of the United States.

This report relies on five US datasets: the General Social Survey (GSS),<sup>10</sup> years 1977–2022; the 2024 Pew Religious Landscape Study (PRLS);<sup>11</sup> the Cooperative Election Survey (CES);<sup>12</sup> the 2025 Spiritual Seismology Survey (SSS);<sup>13</sup> and the Family Foundations of Youth Development Study (FFYD),<sup>14</sup> years 2016–2024.<sup>15</sup> The GSS, PRLS, CES, and SSS are nationally representative data sources. However, most of these datasets do not follow the same people over time and are therefore unable to capture how individuals change over the years. For example, when examining those who deidentify from a religion, cross-sectional studies can only examine their characteristics *after* the deidentification. In contrast, the FFYD surveyed the same individuals every other year from 2016 to 2024 (from approximately ages 13 to 21). For those who deidentified during these years, the FFYD has pre- and post-deidentification data, providing some insight into people’s characteristics before and after they deidentified. The FFYD has approximately two thousand youth (along with one parent from each household) who live in Utah, Arizona, and California. Drawing on all five datasets allows us to more accurately describe and understand the current religious behaviors, beliefs, well-being, and belonging of Latter-day Saints.

This report will frequently compare members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to members of

other religions. However, religious affiliation options are not all the same across the various surveys. Some surveys may ask what specific denomination a person belongs to, whereas other surveys may only ask broadly whether a person is Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, or something else. All the surveys used in this report ask specifically whether a person is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When Latter-day Saints are compared to members of other religions, an important question is, What is the most appropriate comparison? For example, should Latter-day Saints be compared to those who belong to the religious tradition of Protestantism, to members of a specific family within Protestantism (for example, Baptists), or to members of specific Protestant denominations (for example, members of the Southern Baptist Convention)? Pew asks about specific denominations, places those denominations into families, and then places those families into religious traditions (for example, in the dataset, the Southern Baptist Convention is within the Baptist family which is within the Protestant tradition). Indicative of the unique location of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the religious landscape, the Pew survey places the Church in all three of these categories: denomination, family, and tradition. The only other such denominations are Jehovah’s Witness and Catholic.

When Pew compares the Latter-day Saint religion to other religions, it typically does so by comparing Latter-day Saint members with members of more broad religious traditions, such as Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, or Hindu.<sup>16</sup> Although this can be useful, when researchers are specifically interested in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, such comparisons often fall short.

The Church is a single organization with membership records, an institutional hierarchy, and patterns and processes that all members everywhere are influenced by. A recent example is that the Church recently changed the pattern for Sunday School leadership and the time spent in Sunday School.<sup>17</sup> This is a change felt by all attending

---

10. “The General Social Survey,” NORC at the University of Chicago, accessed April 25, 2026, <https://gss.norc.org/>.

11. Smith and others, *Decline of Christianity*.

12. Latter-day Saints often use the initials CES as short for Church Educational System, but the CES data herein refer to the Cooperative Election Survey.

13. The full SSS data contain over 100,000 participants with 1,668 current or former Latter-day Saints. We had access to only the Latter-day Saint sample. See appendix A.

14. Justin Dyer, “Family Foundations of Youth Development,” Brigham Young University, accessed April 25, 2026, <https://foundations.byu.edu/>.

15. Details of GSS methodology can be found at <https://gss.norc.org/>, PRLS methodology at <https://www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/>, and CCES methodology at <https://cces.gov.harvard.edu/>. SSS and FFYD data methodology can be found in appendix A.

---

16. For example, Smith and others, *Decline of Christianity*, 108.

17. “Changes to the Sunday Class Meeting Schedule,” Newsroom, March 30, 2026, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

Latter-day Saints worldwide. When scholars are interested in Latter-day Saints, they are implicitly interested in the Church's structure and how it may impact the lives of Latter-day Saints. When comparing, for example, those in the religious traditions of Protestantism and Islam, one is comparing the broad belief sets (typically including shared scripture) and the historical legacies of those traditions, but what is not being compared is a specific organizational structure or hierarchy that influences individual members since such an overall structure does not exist for these broad religious traditions. Although religious tradition serves as an essential backdrop for denominations, when examining a specific denomination, what is being examined is the influence of its leadership, policies, and practices as experienced by the members of that denomination.

When comparing a denomination to a broad religious tradition such as Protestantism, a specific organizational structure is being compared to a conglomeration of organizational structures. As a simple analogy, if one is interested in how comparatively well a school is doing, one would not compare that school to a school district. Doing so would mask important individual differences within that district. By comparing one school to other schools, implications of specific organizational differences can be derived.

The purpose of this report is to understand the specific denomination of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and how it differs from similar organizations—not from a conglomerate of beliefs and historical influences. In our analyses, we therefore compare (to the degree possible) Latter-day Saints to members of other specific denominations rather than to religious traditions or denominational families.

At the same time, when examining religiousness and well-being, we note here that it makes little difference whether we compare Latter-day Saints to denominations or to broad religious traditions. As this report finds, no matter how the data are sliced, Latter-day Saints are at or near the top of religiousness and well-being compared

---

<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/changes-sunday-meeting-schedule>.

to other religions. Given this, when examining religiousness and well-being in this report, we generally present Latter-day Saints as compared to other religious traditions rather than to all religious families or denominations. This simplifies and enhances the readability of our graphs. However, when available, in appendix B we also provide comparisons to families of religions as well as comparisons to denominations.

We also note that this report does not make comparisons to many smaller religions, such as the Amish. It may be that some of these smaller religions are comparable to or higher than Latter-day Saints in various aspects of religiousness, well-being, and retention. However, given their smaller numbers, national surveys often do not include sufficient numbers of respondents to analyze. For example, the GSS only has five individuals who self-identified as Amish. We therefore acknowledge the limitation of not being able to represent these religions.

For retention, however, the comparison group makes all the difference and is crucial for interpretation. For example, the Pew Research Center compares the retention rate of the Protestant tradition (70%) to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (54%).<sup>18</sup> From this, some may assume that Protestant denominations have a higher retention rate than the Church. However, the 70% does not account for switching between Protestant religions and results in comparing “apples to oranges.” Using schools as an example again, one school may be losing a substantial number of its students to other schools within the district. If one looks at retention within only the district, the district retains students well even while one school faces a retention crisis. To assess how relatively well a school is retaining its students, the meaningful comparison is to other schools.

Similarly, religious retention rates are best compared at the same level of organization: traditions to traditions and denominations to denominations. Although a broader tradition may retain individuals who move between denominations within it, a denomination does not retain those who leave it. That distinction has substantial implications for the denomination itself. Even if members leave for

---

18. Smith and others, *Decline of Christianity*, 108.

another denomination within the same broader tradition, the denomination they leave still experiences a loss in membership and hence a loss in reach and institutional impact. A recent example is the United Methodist Church, which had 7,600 of its congregations split from it in a single year.<sup>19</sup> Although many of these congregations are

still Protestant (indeed, still Methodist), the denomination suffered an incredible blow. Given we are interested in retention of the specific denomination of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the meaningful comparison is to other denominations.<sup>20</sup>

---

19. Taylor W. Burton Edwards, “Part 5: Ending Disaffiliation,” updated November 2024, The People of The United Methodist Church, <https://www.umc.org/en/content/ask-the-umc-the-umc-really-is-part-5-ending-disaffiliation>.

---

20. Indeed, it would be of substantial consequence to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints if it were to lose several thousand congregations in a schism. To treat the Church as a “tradition” would obscure such changes.

# Religiousness

## Religious Practices

### Religious Service Attendance

Attendance at church religious services is a key marker of religiousness.<sup>21</sup> Using the PRLS, we found that 76% of

Latter-day Saint Millennial+ (combining Millennials and Gen Z) and those of earlier generations attend religious services at least monthly, more than all other religious groups surveyed (fig. 1).<sup>22</sup> The next closest are Evangelicals at 59% of Millennial+ and 61% of previous generations.

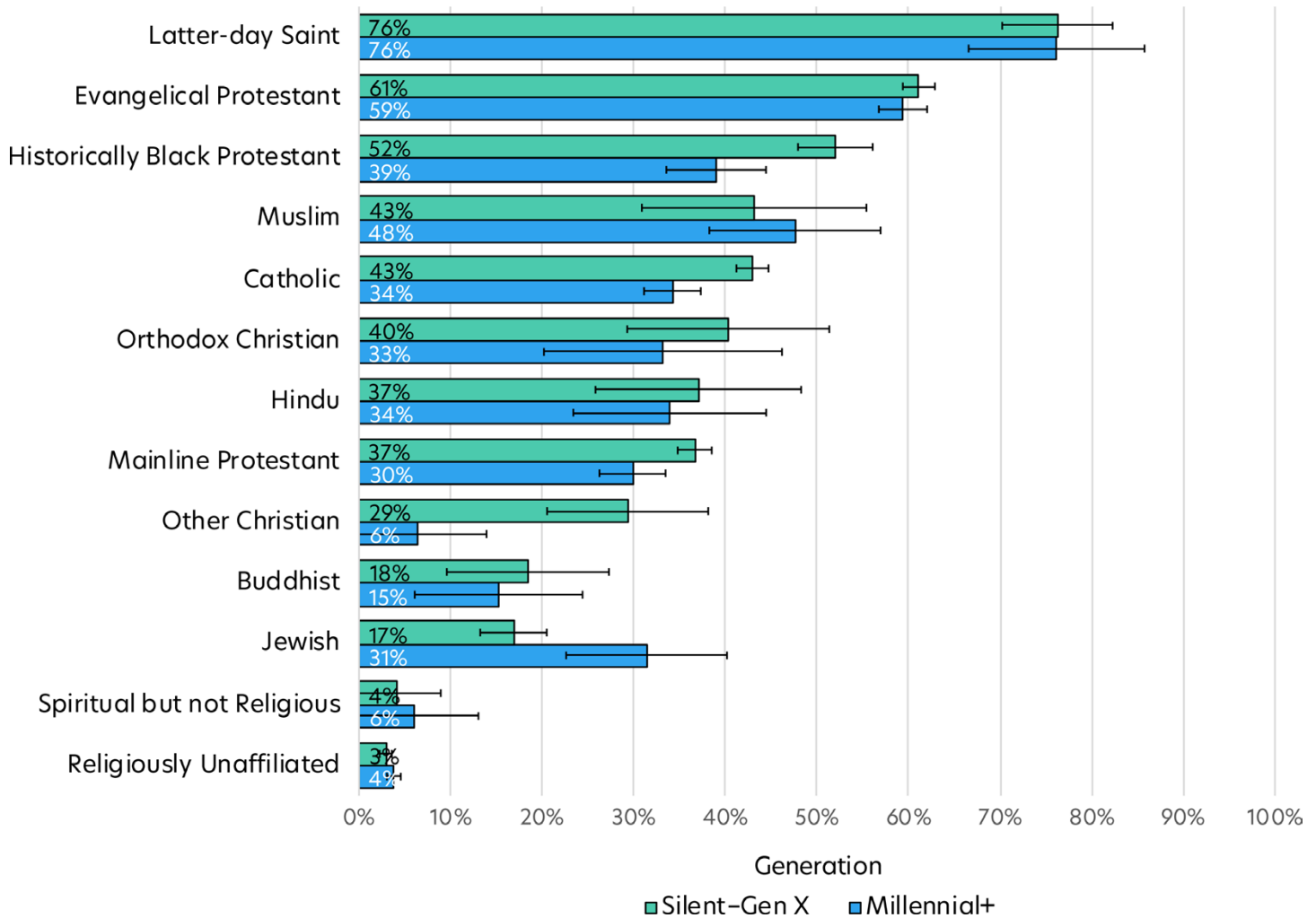


Figure 1. At Least Monthly Religious Service Attendance by Religious Tradition (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,652)

21. At the same time, we do acknowledge the religious diversity in the degree to which attendance at religious services is encouraged. For some religions, this is a high priority whereas for other religions, other forms of worship are emphasized. Yet gathering for worship is a meaningful activity in and of itself, indicating religious group participation

which has been associated with positive outcomes. Harold G. Koenig, Tyler J. Vanderweele, and John R. Peteet, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2023), 78–79.

22. PRLS question: “Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services in person?”

The 95% confidence intervals for Latter-day Saints are far above other religions, indicating a statistically significant difference.<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, Millennial+ Muslims and Jews have higher rates of religious service attendance than previous generations.

**76% of Latter-day Saint Millennials and Gen Z attend religious services at least monthly—more than any other religion surveyed.**

When examining weekly attendance, there is an even greater gap between Latter-day Saints and those of other faiths: 69% of Latter-day Saints attend church at least weekly, while 51% of Evangelicals, the next closest, attend church at least weekly (18% lower than Latter-day Saint levels).

The CES data (again, this is the Cooperative Election Survey, not to be confused with the Church Educational System) find that Latter-day Saints have maintained the highest rates of church attendance throughout the period

of religious decline in the United States.<sup>24</sup> Figure 2<sup>25</sup> displays the percentage of those attending religious services at least monthly since 2008.<sup>26</sup> While Latter-day Saints have experienced a decrease in this percentage over time (from just above 80% in 2008 to just below 70% in 2024<sup>27</sup>), they remain the highest at each time point. Notably, these data also indicate a downward trend in religious attendance for most religions, though Latter-day Saints seem to be declining at a somewhat faster rate. Thus, even while Latter-day Saints remain at higher attendance rates, this downward trend may be leading to a narrower gap between Latter-day Saints and other religions.

We also examined religious attendance over time for younger generations of Latter-day Saints. As indicated by the CES data (fig. 3), approximately 70%–90% of Latter-day Saint Millennial+ have attended church at least monthly from 2008 to 2024, the years of greatest religious decline in the United States. Born Again Protestants have the second highest level of religious service attendance across that time.

---

23. Confidence intervals express the level of uncertainty we have about the numbers we present. Given that not every Latter-day Saint, Evangelical, Muslim, etc. was surveyed, we do not know the exact percentage of those who feel religion is “very important” (this also goes for the other numbers in this report). A 95% confidence interval gives a plausible range for the true percentage. For example, 76% of Millennial+ Latter-day Saints in the survey said they attend at least monthly. The confidence interval is from roughly 65% to 85%, meaning we are 95% confident the true percentage is within that range. Because these confidence intervals are higher than the estimate for Evangelical Protestants, we say these two groups differ in a statistically significant way at the 95% confidence level (a technical term meaning differences between groups are unlikely due to chance). In this report, when differences are referred to as “significant,” this indicates the differences are statistically significant.

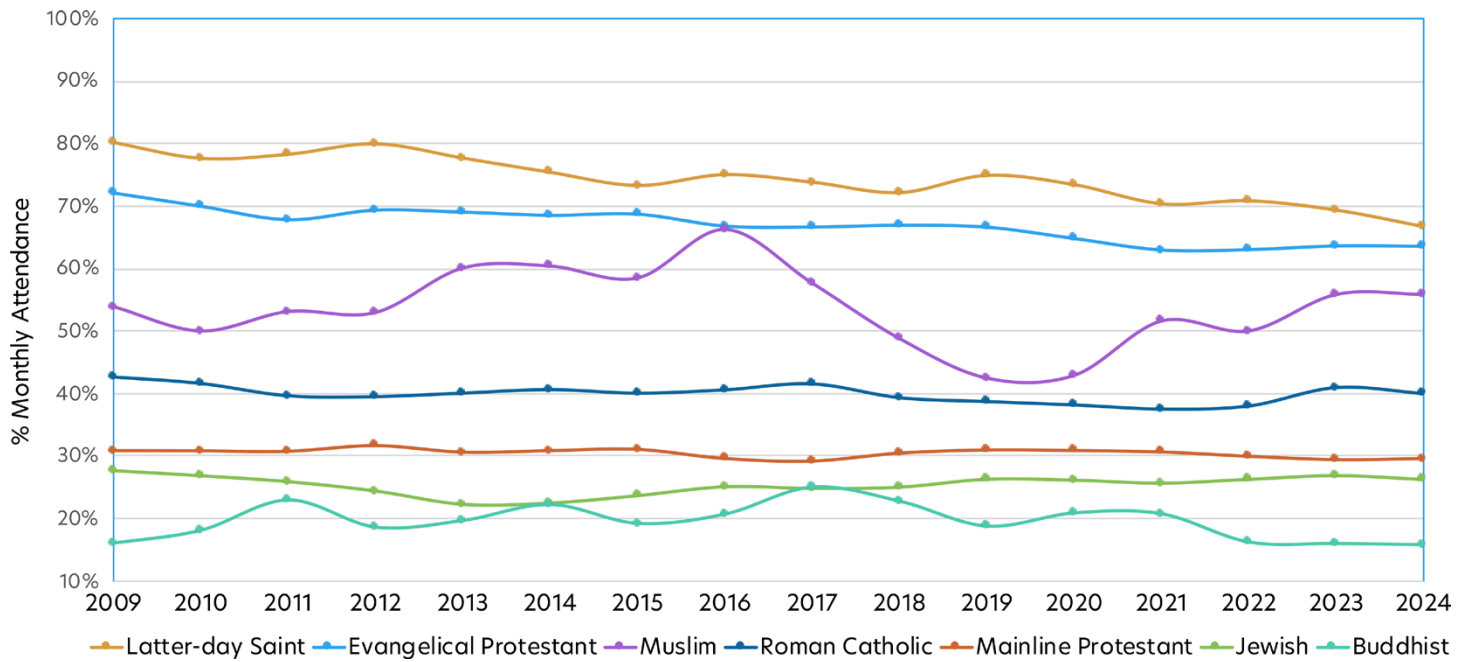
---

24. The groups presented here may be somewhat different from what is presented in earlier figures. This is due to the different dataset being used and the slightly different religious categories. For instance, PRLS only specifies “Catholic” whereas CES specifies “Roman Catholic.” PRLS and CES datasets use different terminology to refer to similar groups. “Born again” and “Evangelical” are often used synonymously. Though it should be noted that certain differences exist. Rather than standardizing on a single label (Evangelical or Born Again), we use the language of each survey when referring to Evangelical Protestants or Born Again Protestants.

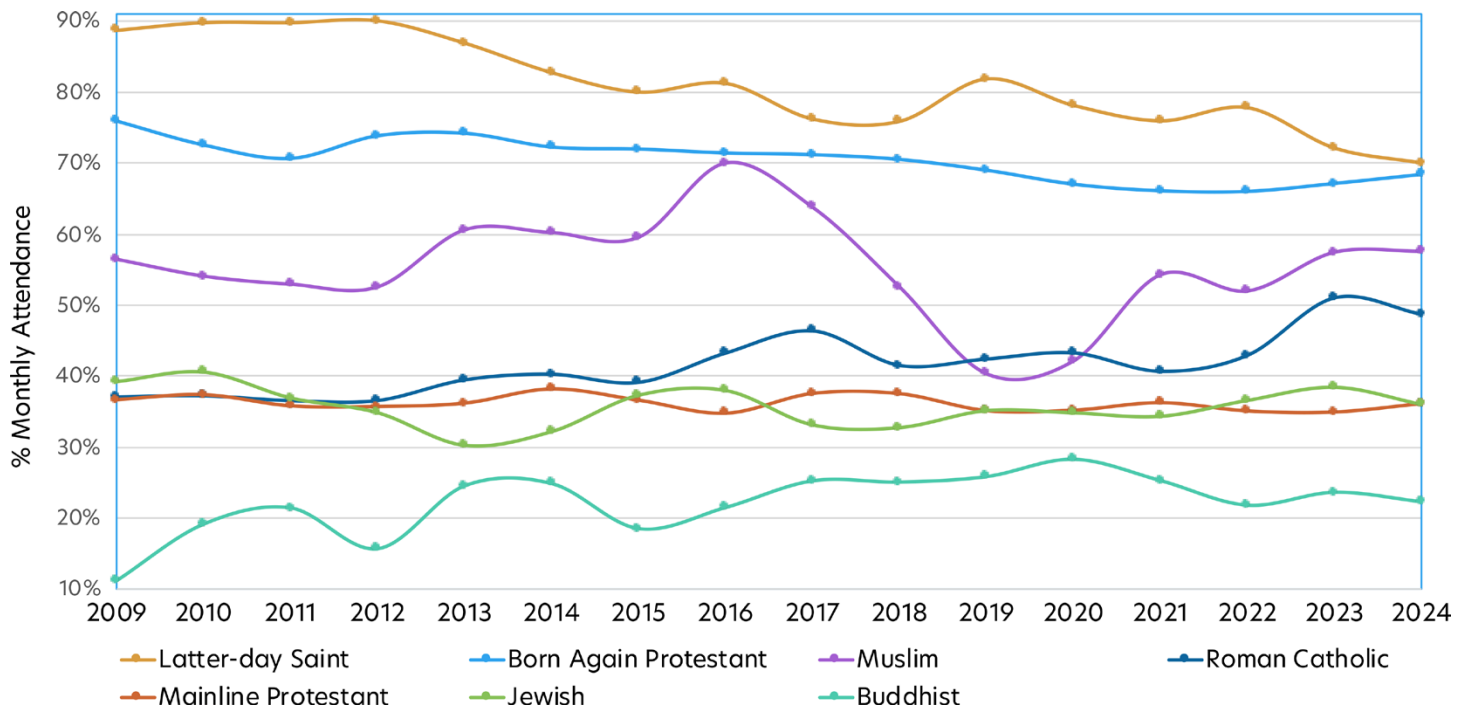
25. CES question: “Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services in person?”

26. To better observe overall trends, figures 2 and 3 are based on a two-year moving average. In addition, the relatively large change in Muslim attendance is likely due to the small sample size.

27. Note this CES number differs from the PRLS. This may be due to several factors. Because PRLS survey’s 95% confidence interval includes the number 70%, this means the CES result of 70% is still within the range of values that the PRLS would consider plausible. Therefore, statistically speaking, the two surveys are not in disagreement.



**Figure 2.** Changes in Adult Religious Attendance by Religion over Time (Cooperative Election Study, 2008–24; n=394,801; two-year moving average)



**Figure 3.** Changes in Millennial+ Religious Attendance by Religion over Time (Cooperative Election Study, 2008–24; n=91,231; two-year moving average)

## Prayer and Scripture Reading

Latter-day Saints also have high levels of private religious behaviors at a time when these are becoming less widely practiced. For example, the percentage of Americans who say they pray daily has dropped since 2007 but has hovered

around 44% since 2021.<sup>28</sup> In comparison, the most recent PRLS found that 70% of Latter-day Saint Millennial+ pray daily, while 78% of those of previous generations pray daily (fig. 4).<sup>29</sup> This is statistically tied with Historically Black Protestants and Evangelical Protestants.

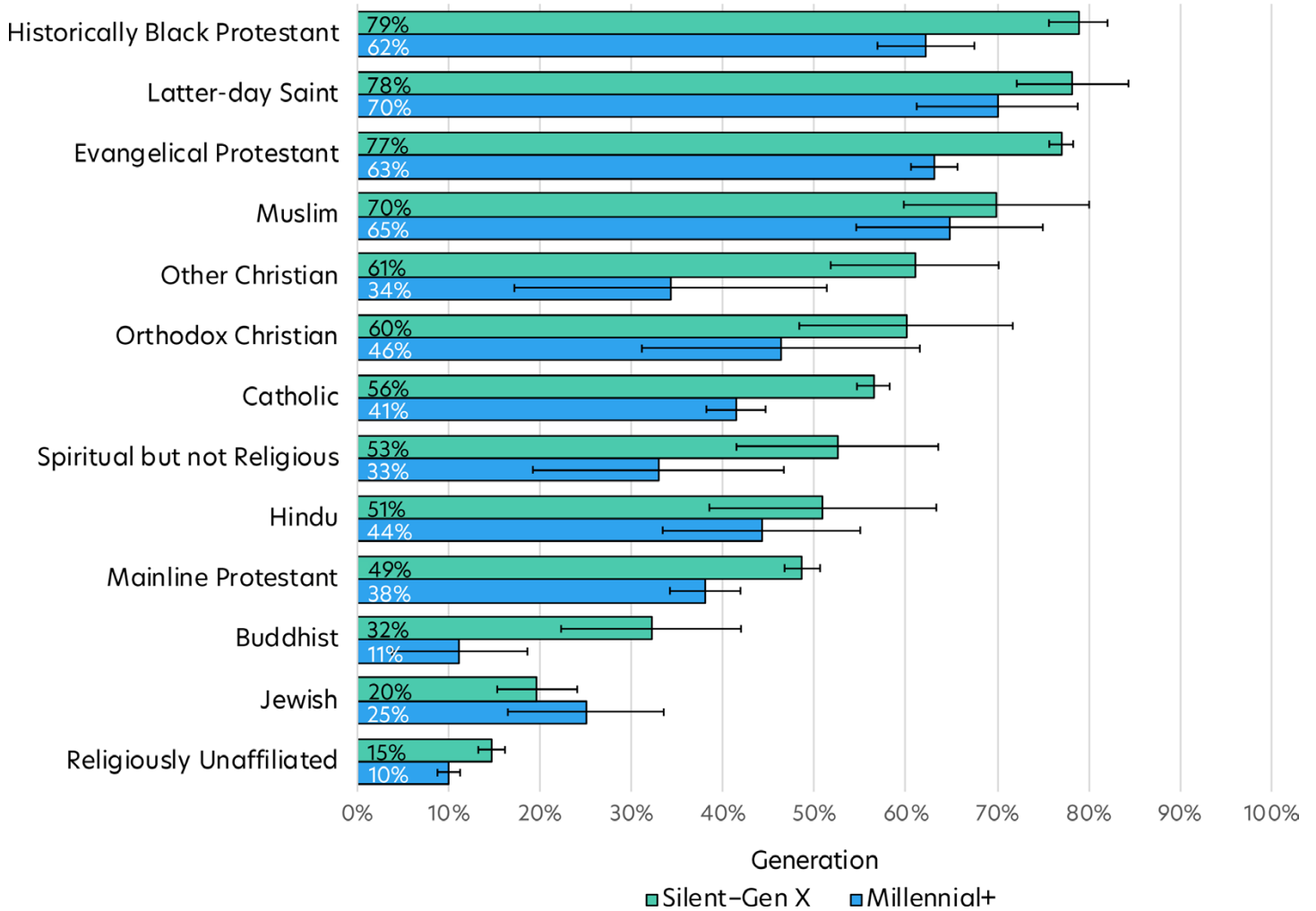


Figure 4. Daily Prayer by Religion and Generation (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,569)

**Latter-day Saints lead the nation in weekly scripture reading: 56% of Millennial+ versus 44% for the next-highest group.**

28. Smith and others, *Decline of Christianity*, 180.

29. PRLS question: “Outside of attending religious services, how often do you pray?”

Latter-day Saints also have the highest rate of at least weekly scripture reading,<sup>30</sup> (56% Millennial+; 63% earlier generations) followed by Evangelicals (44% Millennial+; 55% earlier generations) and “Historically Black Protestants” (40% Millennial+; 51% earlier generations) (fig. 5).

**80% of Latter-day Saint parents pray or read scripture with their children—the highest of any faith surveyed.**

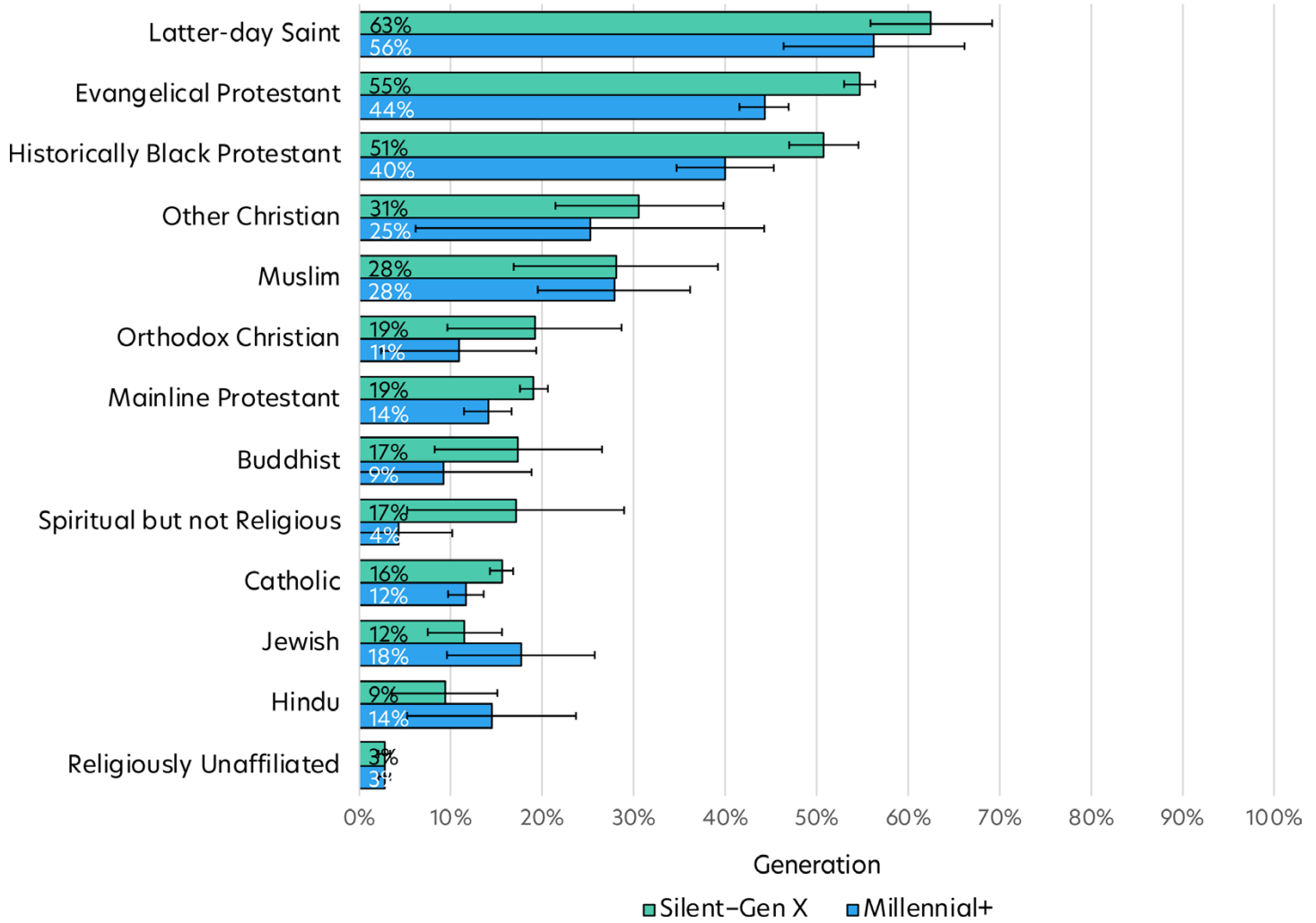


Figure 5. Weekly Scripture Reading by Religion (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,535)

30. PRLS question: “How often do you read scripture outside of religious services?”

## Parents Praying or Reading Scriptures with Their Children

Eighty percent of Latter-day Saint parents pray and/or read scriptures with their children<sup>31</sup> (fig. 6) compared to 73% of Evangelicals and 70% of Muslims. The next closest are Historically Black Protestants at 66%.

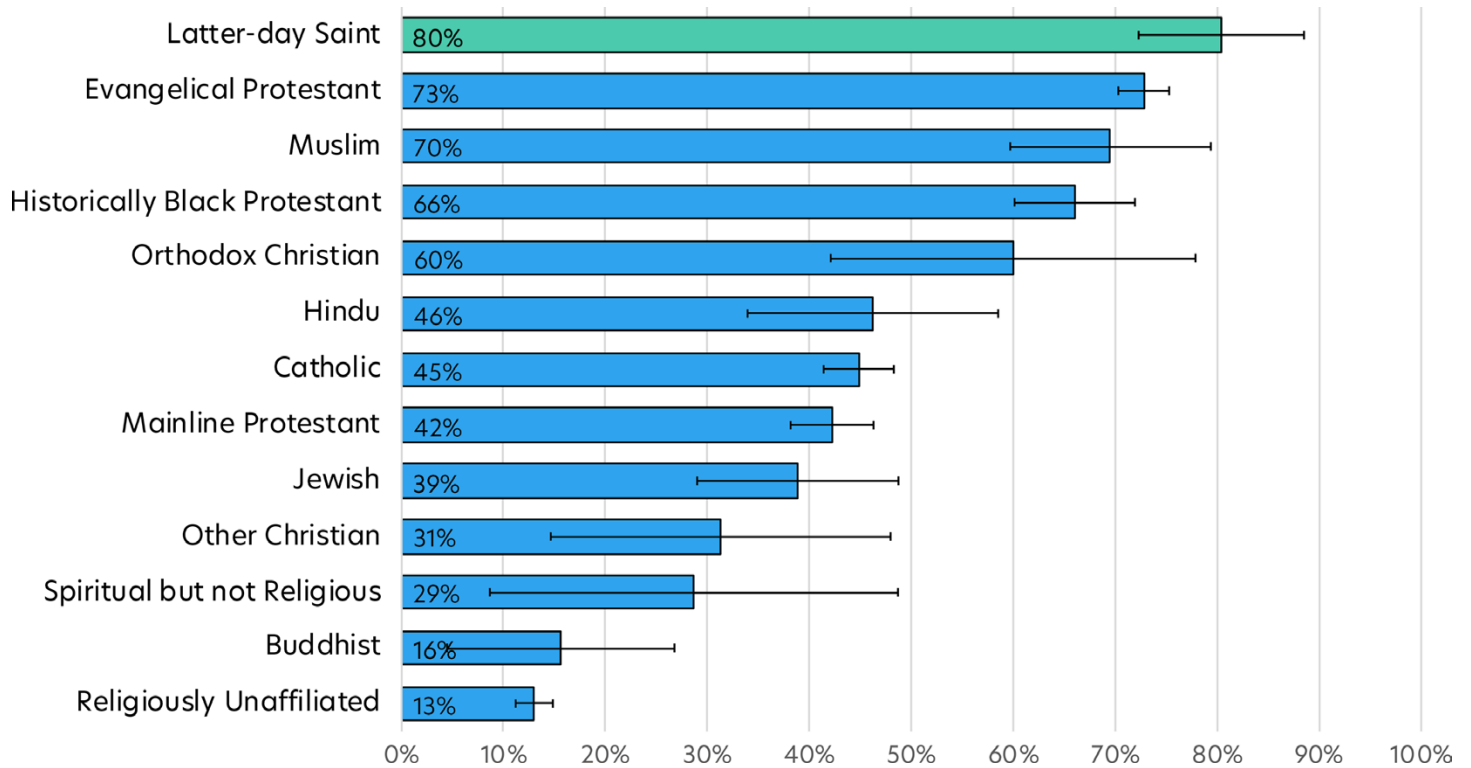


Figure 6. Parents Praying and/or Reading Scriptures with Their Children by Religion (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=8,105)

31. PRLS question: “Do you pray or read scripture with any of your children?” (yes/no response).

### Youth Religious Practices

The above analyses include only adults. However, the FFYD data allowed us to examine these levels for youth (ages 12–18) across religions (see table 1; note that the sample sizes of Protestant, Catholic, and “Other Religion”

are much smaller than the sample size of Latter-day Saints). Similar to the findings for adults, compared to their peers, Latter-day Saint youth have higher rates of religious service attendance, daily prayer, and daily scripture reading than their peers of other faiths.

**Table 1. Youth Religious Practices Across Religions (Family Foundations of Youth Development Study, 2020)**

Religious Behavior	Latter-day Saint	Protestant <sup>b</sup>	Catholic	Other Religion	Total
Monthly religious service attendance <sup>a</sup>	90.3%	67.6%	50.3%	29.5%	79.2%
Daily prayer	58.6%	35.8%	18.4%	19.7%	48.5%
Daily scripture reading	36.5%	14.2%	5.5%	6.6%	28.0%
Number of youth	875	176	163	61	1,275

<sup>a</sup> If COVID restrictions were in place for worship attendance, participants were asked to respond according to conditions before the restrictions.

<sup>b</sup> There were too few Protestants to separate Evangelical and Mainline.

## Importance of Religion

### Importance of Religion by Religion and Generation

Using the PRLS data, we examined the percentage of Millennial+ and earlier generations who feel religion is “very important” in their lives (fig. 7).<sup>32</sup> For Latter-day Saints, 69% of Millennial+ and 77% of earlier generations feel religion is “very important” to them. This is second to Historically Black Protestants. However, given the 95% confidence intervals, the percentage is not statistically different from them. Latter-day Saints, Historically Black Protestants, and Evangelicals are substantially higher than

every other religious group. Similar to religious service attendance, Millennial+ are lower than earlier generations for each religion except Muslims, Jews, and Other Christians.

Using the CES data, we made comparisons across religious groups and time in the percentage of those who feel “religion is very important in their lives”<sup>33</sup> (fig. 8a). Born Again Protestants have the highest percentage, followed by Latter-day Saints. Although the percentages are still high, it appears the number of Latter-day Saints who feel “religion is very important” may be decreasing more than Born Again Protestants. The percentages of several other religious groups, such as Roman Catholics and Mainline

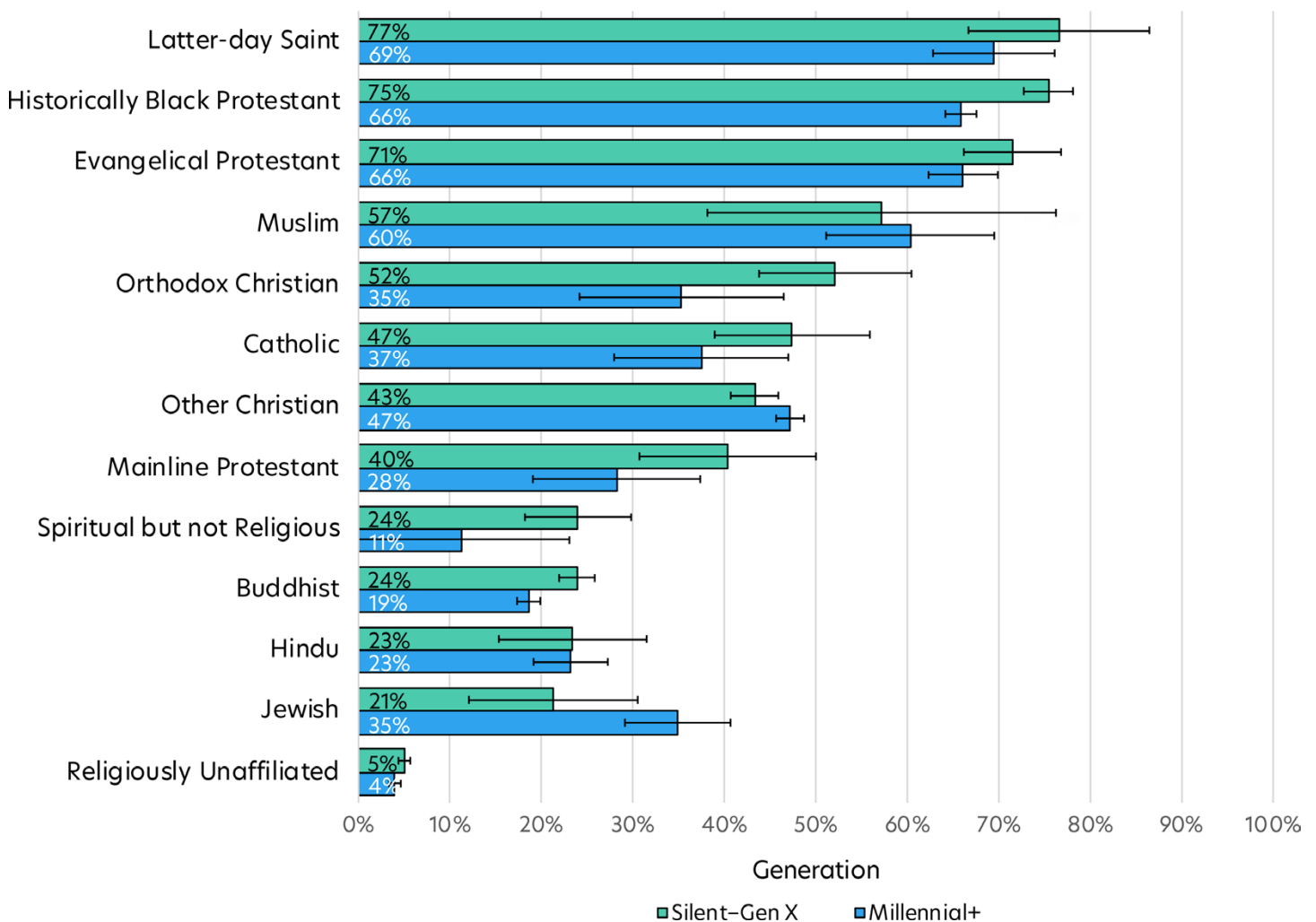


Figure 7. Percentage Who Feel Religion Is “Very Important” in Their Lives (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,676)

32. PRLS question: “How important is religion in your life?”

33. CES question: “How important is religion in your life?”

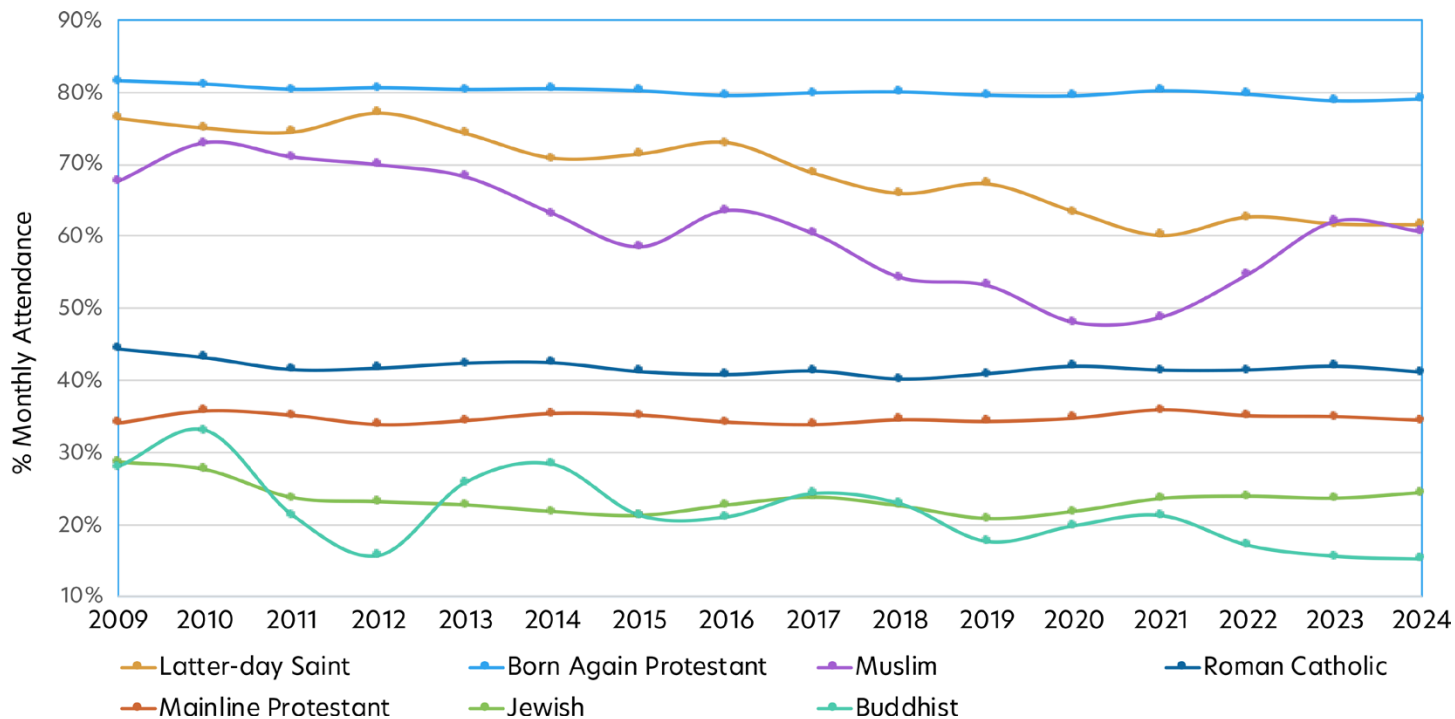


Figure 8a. Percentage Who Feel Religion Is “Very Important” in Their Lives (Cooperative Election Study, 2008–24; n=390,784), full sample

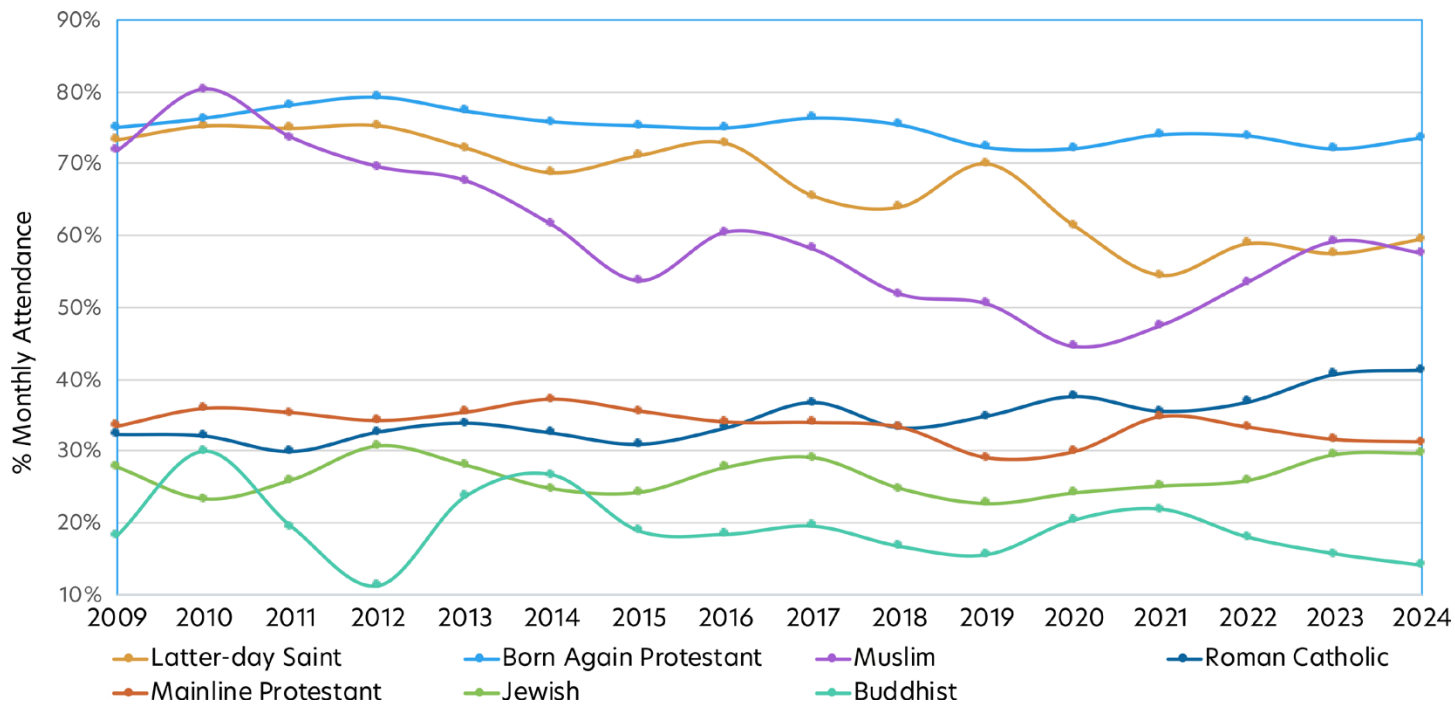


Figure 8b. Percentage Who Feel Religion Is “Very Important” in Their Lives (Cooperative Election Study, 2008–24; n=90,680), Millennial+ only

Protestants, are relatively steady across time, though substantially lower than Latter-day Saints. For example, Roman Catholics remain steady in the percentage who think “religion is very important” to them, yet their levels are more than 20% lower than Latter-day Saints.

When comparing Millennial+ across religions and years (fig. 8b), Evangelical Protestants are the highest in

feeling “religion is very important in their lives,” followed by Latter-day Saints and then Muslims (occasionally, Muslims are higher than Latter-day Saints). All others are 10% or more lower than these religious groups. It should be acknowledged that the greater variability in religious importance across time for Millennial+ is likely partially due to a smaller sample size.

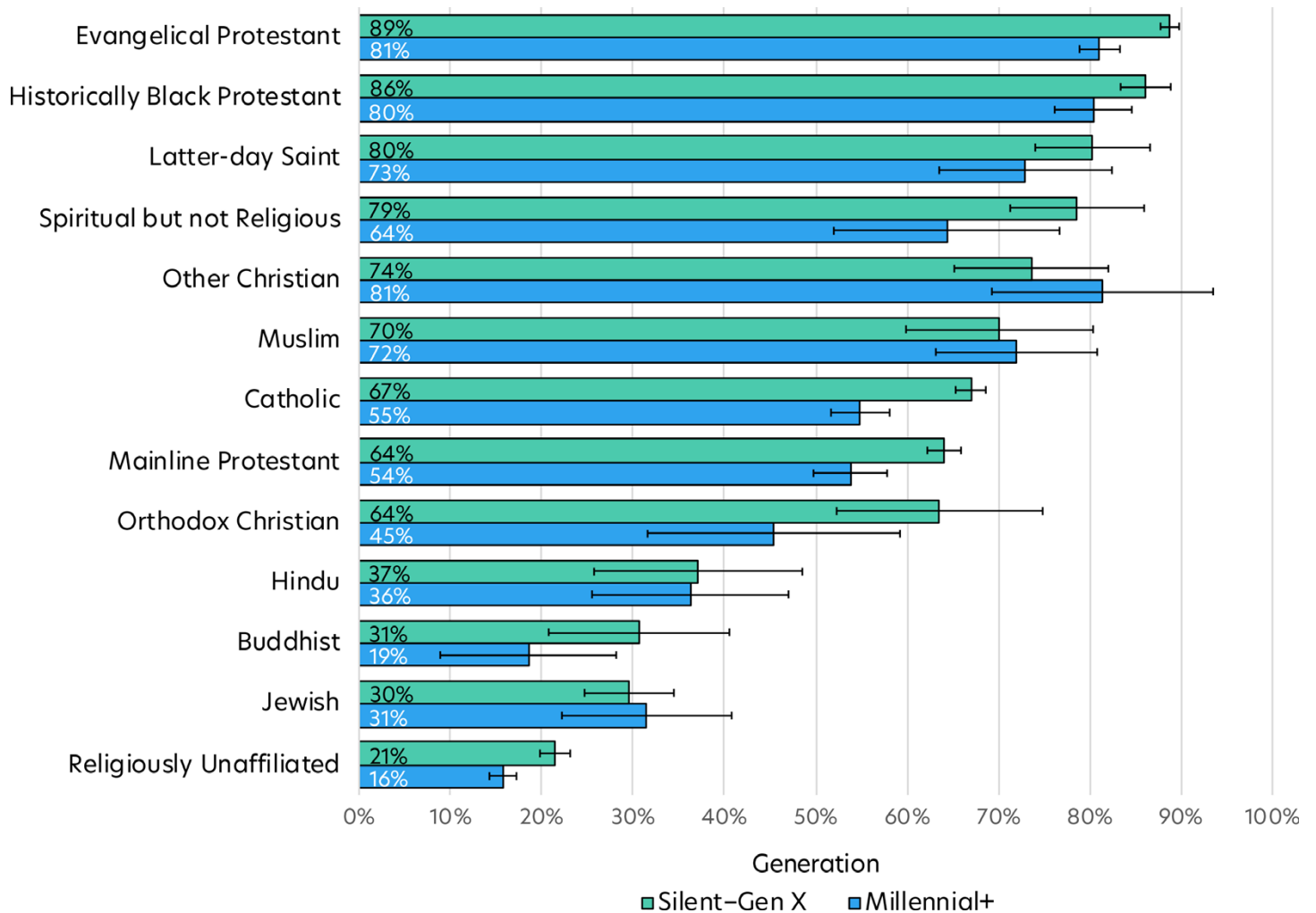


Figure 9. Percentage that Are “Absolutely Certain” There Is a God or Universal Spirit by Religion and Generation (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,221)

## Religious Beliefs

We used the PRLS data to examine how various beliefs differ across religions and generations (fig. 9). For example, Evangelicals have the highest rate of being “absolutely certain” there is a God or universal spirit.<sup>34</sup> They are followed by Historically Black Protestants and then Latter-day Saints.

Using the PRLS, we also made comparisons in religious beliefs between Millennial+ Latter-day Saints and older generations of Latter-day Saints (see table 2). For the most part, previous generations of Latter-day Saints are higher in these beliefs than Millennial+ Latter-day Saints. The largest difference is that previous generations are 18% higher than Millennial+ in believing the Bible

to be “extremely” important in their lives. Interestingly, Millennial+ are slightly more likely to believe that people have a soul or spirit. This comports with some research finding that while Millennial+ may be less connected to religion and traditional religious beliefs, pure, nonspiritual secularism has not won them over. Indeed, while traditional religious beliefs have declined, Millennial+ may be more likely to subscribe to nontraditional ideas that deviate from Western mainstream beliefs.<sup>35</sup> Overall, the highest scores are beliefs in heaven, that God is good and loves them, and that Jesus died for their sins. All these are above 85% for both Millennial+ and previous generations of Latter-day Saints.

**Table 2. Latter-day Saint Religious Beliefs**  
(Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; Spiritual Seismology Survey, 2025)

Religious Beliefs	Latter-day Saints born pre-1980	Millennial+ Latter-day Saints
Have “Absolutely certain” belief in God	80.3%	73.0%
Believe that religious teachings and beliefs are extremely important in determining right and wrong	58.9%	49.1%
Believe in heaven	95.7%	88.8%
Believe in hell	59.8%	51.5%
Believe people have a soul or spirit	96.8%	98.2%
Believe the Bible is “extremely” important in their lives	57.1%	39.3%
Believe that God is good and loves them (somewhat agree or strongly agree)	91.1%	85.0%
Believe that Jesus died for their sins (somewhat agree or strongly agree)	90.2%	85.8%

*Note.* All categories are from the Pew Religious Landscape Study data except the beliefs that God is good and loves them and Jesus died for their sins, which are from the SSS data.

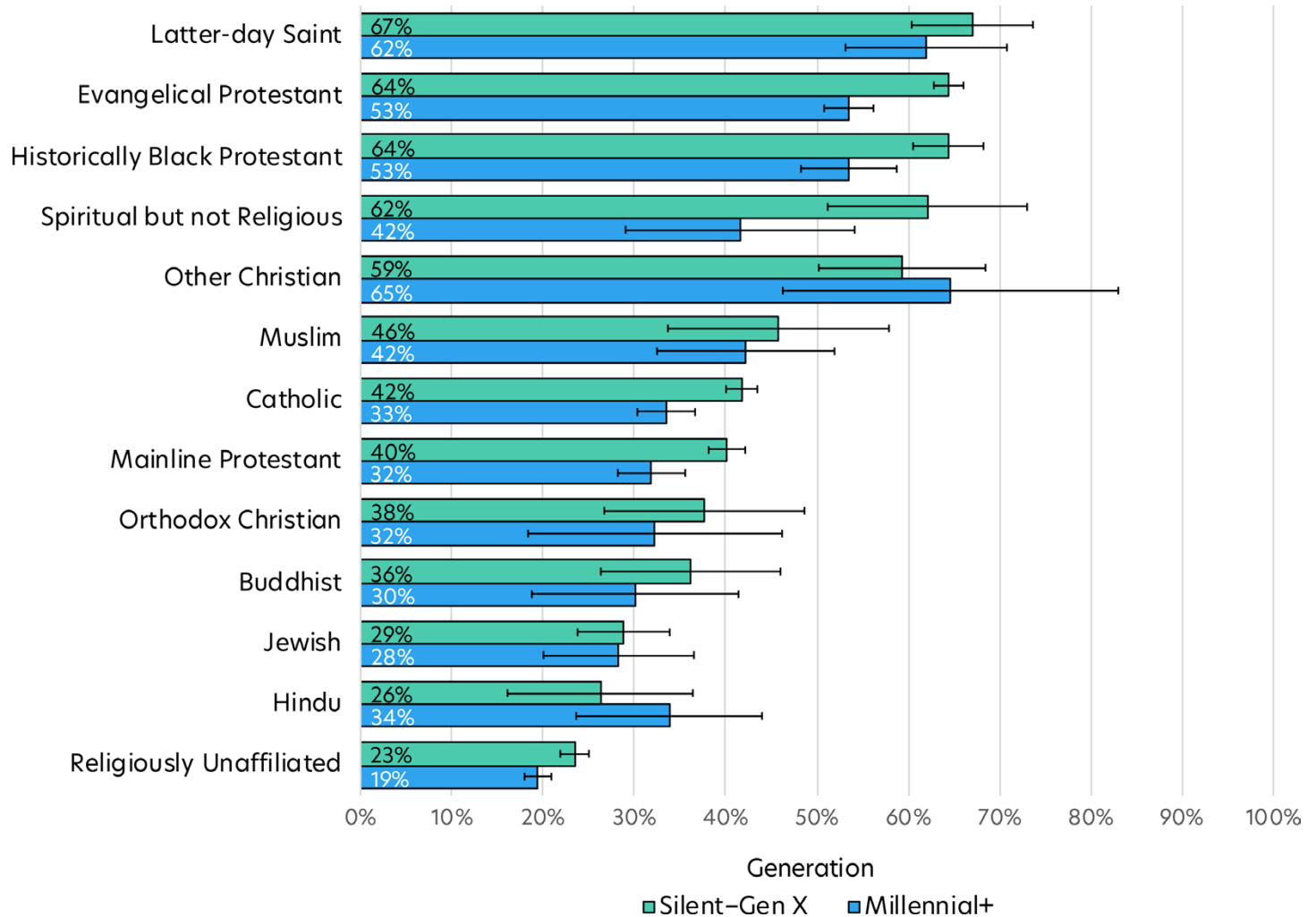
34. PRLS question: “Do you believe in God or a universal spirit?” followed by the question “How certain are you about this belief?” Reported is the percentage that indicated they are “absolutely certain.”

35. For example, compared to earlier generations, Millennials are more likely to believe in supernatural powers of deceased ancestors. Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, *Religion, Spirituality and Secularity Among Millennials* (Routledge, 2023), 49.

## Well-Being

The PRLS found that Latter-day Saints, Evangelicals, and Historically Black Protestants are similarly high in feeling “a deep sense of spiritual peace and well-being” at least once a week<sup>36</sup> (fig. 10). Of these, Latter-day Saints have the smallest difference between the generations, with 62% of Millennial+ Latter-day Saints feeling “a deep sense of

spiritual peace and well-being” at least once a week compared to 67% of earlier generations. Evangelical Protestants and Historically Black Protestants have identical percentages with 53% of Millennial+ feeling a deep sense of spiritual peace and well-being at least once a week compared to 64% of earlier generations.

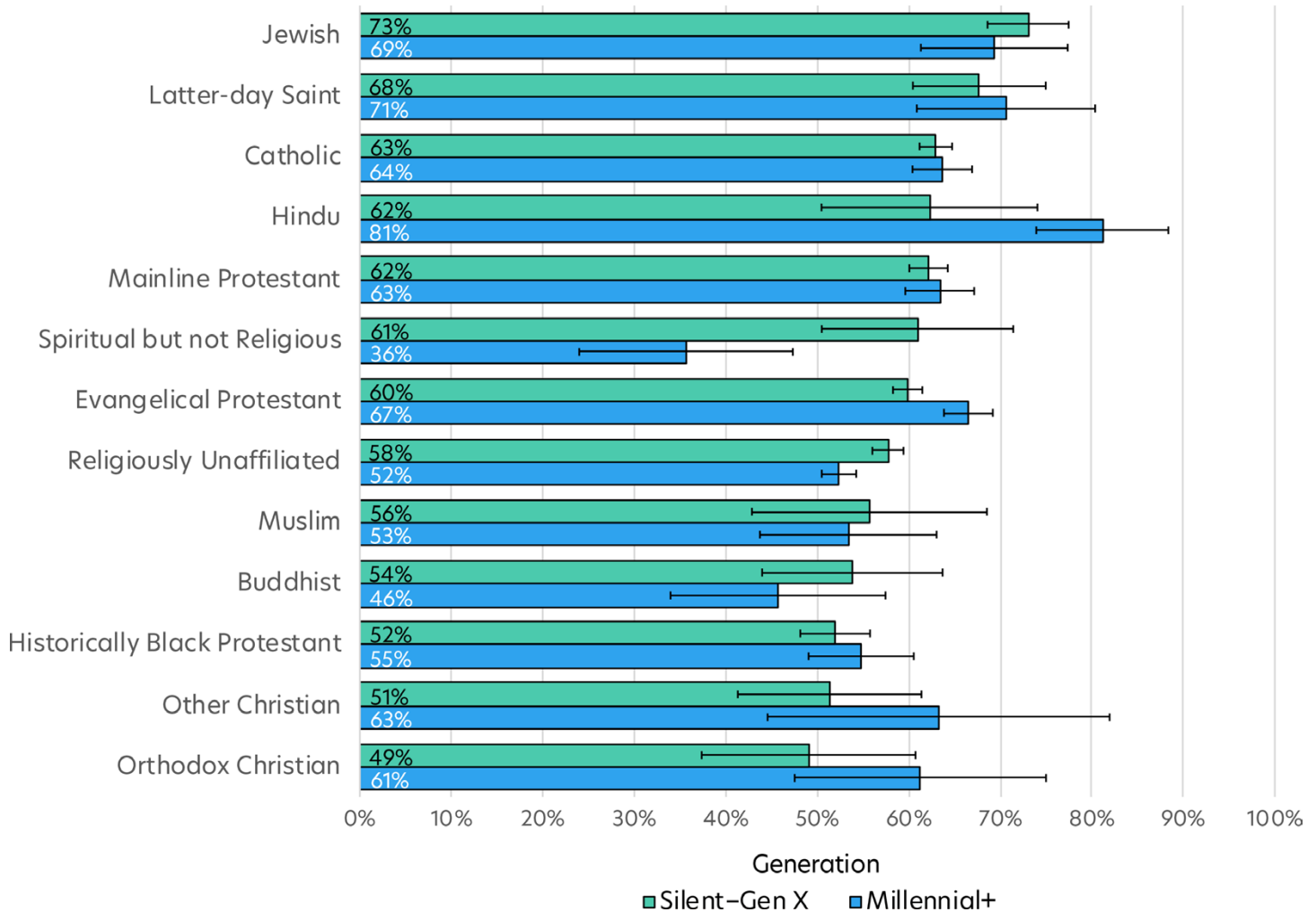


**Figure 10.** Percentage Who Feel a Deep Sense of Spiritual Peace and Well-Being at Least Once a Week (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,210)

36. PRLS question: “How often do you feel a deep sense of spiritual peace and well-being?” with “At least once a week” as a response category.

Latter-day Saints are also among the most likely to say their family lives are “very good” or “excellent.”<sup>37</sup> For earlier generations, Jews are higher than Latter-day Saints, and for Millennial+, Hindus are higher than Latter-day Saints (fig. 11).<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Latter-day Saint Millennial+ are the most likely to say they are “very happy” with their lives. For earlier generations, Latter-day Saints and Historically Black Protestants have similarly high levels of happiness, with 34% indicating they are “very happy” (fig. 12).

**Latter-day Saint Millennials and Gen Z are the most likely of any religion to say they are “very happy” with their lives.**



**Figure 11.** Percentage Who Say Their Family Lives Are “Very Good” or “Excellent” (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,702)

37. PRLS question: “Would you say your family life is . . .” with “Excellent” and “Very good” as response categories.

38. Difference could be attributed to differences in demographic characteristics across religion, such as gender or race. For the well-being measures we also conducted multiple regression analyses controlling for gender and race. Controlling for these made little difference and findings without using controls held.

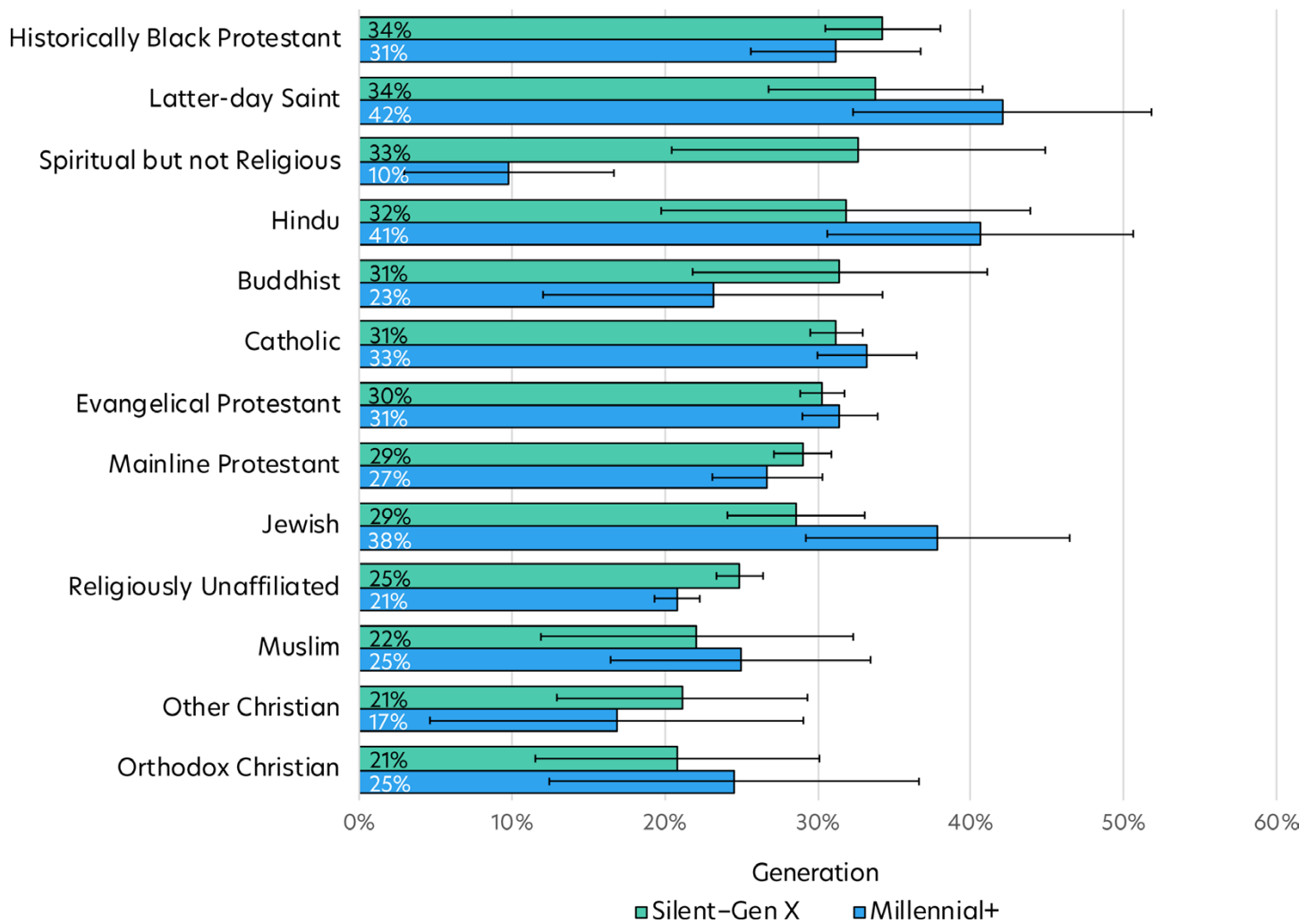


Figure 12. Percentage Who Say They Are “Very Happy” with Their Lives (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,682)

An interesting finding emerged for those who are “Spiritual but not Religious.” Across these three indices—well-being, quality of family life, and general happiness—they have the greatest gap between generations, earlier generations being relatively high on these indices but Millennial+ having some of the lowest levels. For example, 33% of earlier generations of those who are “Spiritual but not Religious” indicate they are very happy with their lives compared to just 10% of those who are Millennial+, the lowest level of any religious group (fig. 12). Similarly, while 61% of earlier generations of “Spiritual but not Religious” say their family lives are “very good” or “excellent,” only 36% of Millennial+ say the same, again the lowest of any religious group (fig. 11). Other research on Gen Z has

similarly found lower levels of well-being for those who are spiritual but not religious.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the PRLS, we used the Healthy Minds Study<sup>40</sup> to compare mental health across religions. This is a large national survey of college students conducted every other year. We used the 2021–2022 data because this was the last year student religion was captured. This is one of the largest national datasets that contains a

39. Addison V. Clevenger and W. Justin Dyer, “Mental Health Across Religious and Spiritual Categories: A Longitudinal Study Among Parents and Their Children,” *Religions* 17, no. 4 (2026): 482, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel17040482>.

40. “The Healthy Minds Study: Student Survey,” The Healthy Minds Network, accessed April 27, 2026, <https://healthymindsnetwork.org/hms/>.

sufficient number of Latter-day Saints (3,521) and also has multiple indicators of well-being. Using these data, we examined the level of risk for depression and anxiety as well as the percentage of those who attempted suicide in the last year. Figures 13–15 display the results, which suggest Latter-day Saints are similar to those of other faiths

in their risk for depression, anxiety, and suicide attempts. Indeed, the 95% confidence intervals overlap with almost all other religious faiths, with those of no faith having significantly higher percentages than Latter-day Saints and those of most other faiths.

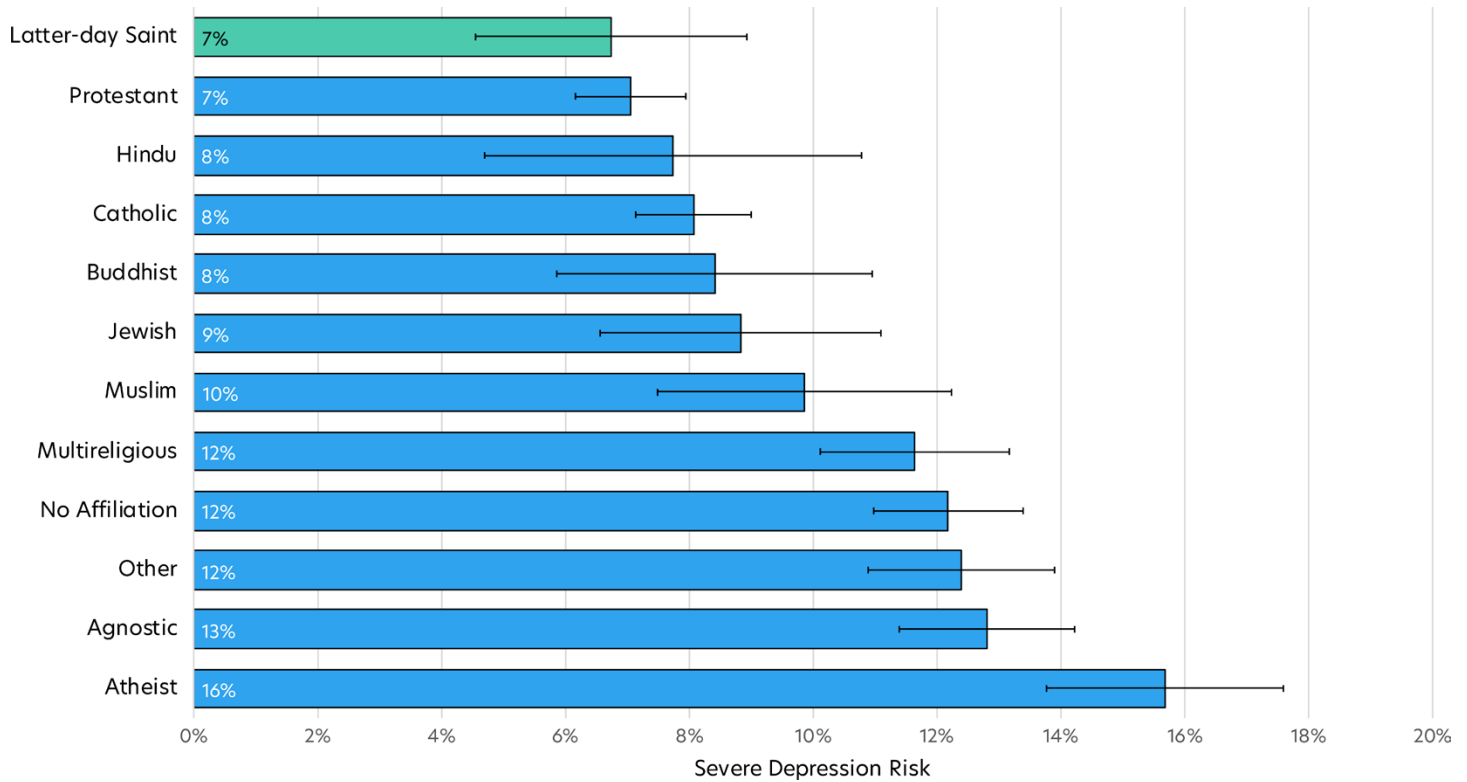


Figure 13. Percentage at Severe Risk for Depression (Healthy Minds, 2021–2022; n=80,822)

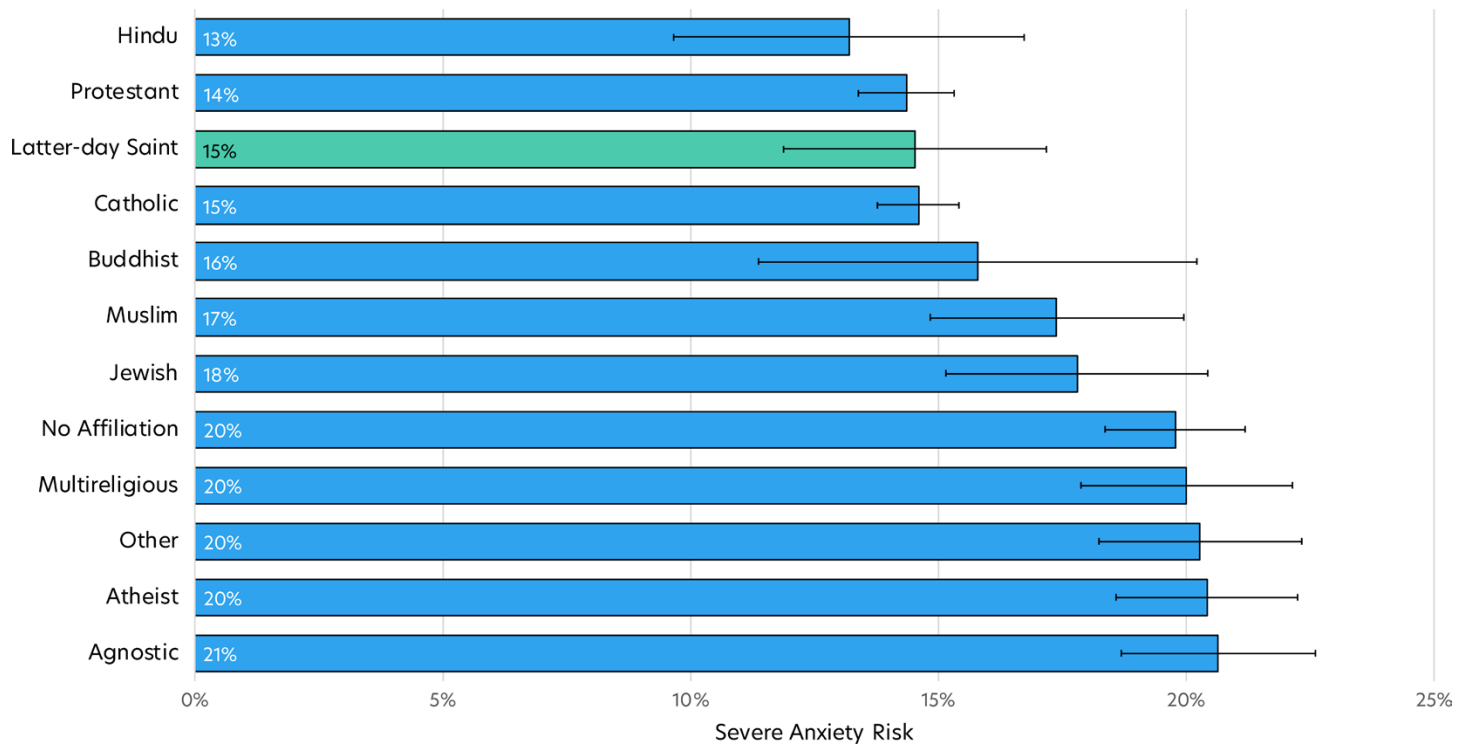


Figure 14. Percentage at Severe Risk for Anxiety (Healthy Minds, 2021–22; n=85,011)

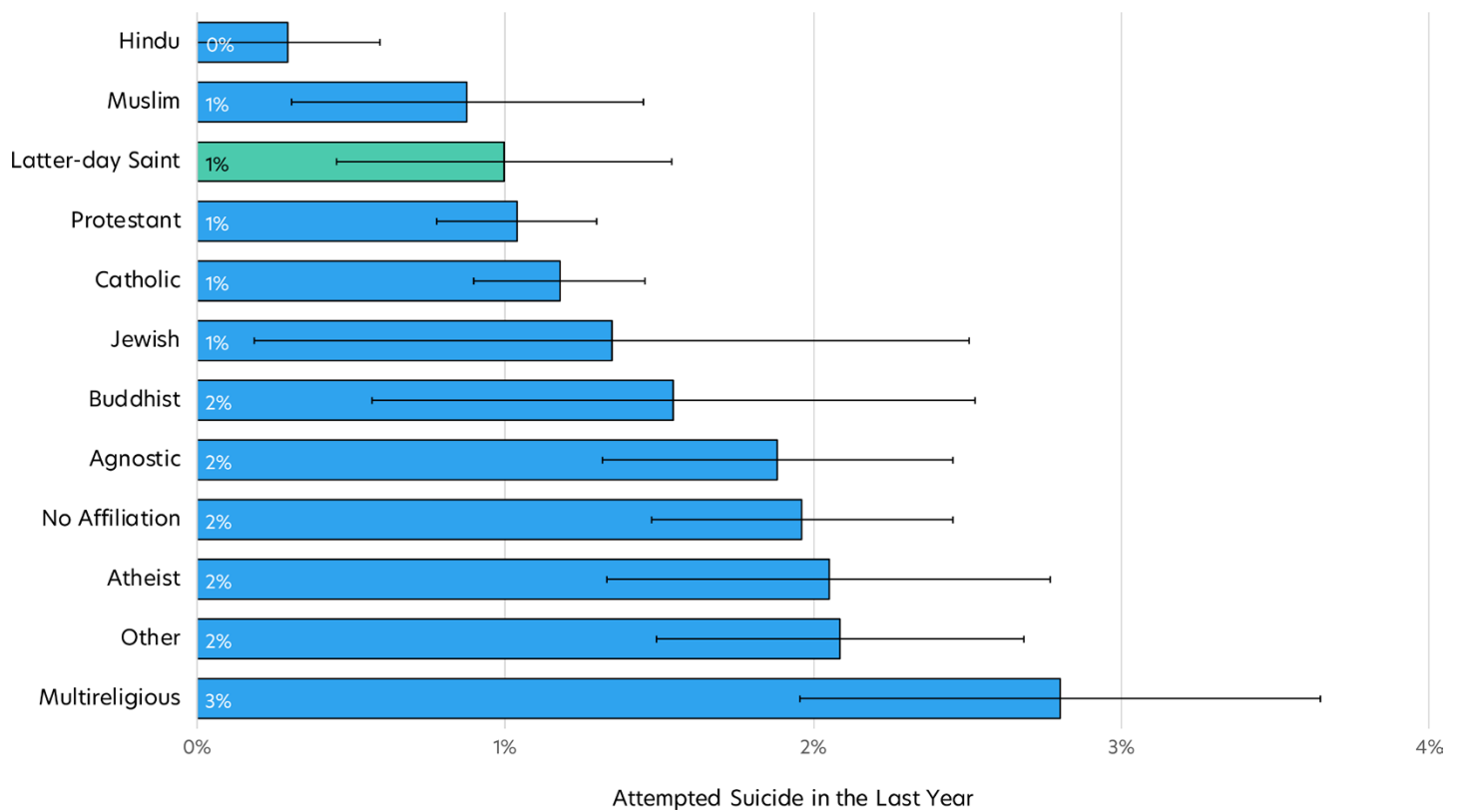


Figure 15. Percentage Who Attempted Suicide in the Last Year (Healthy Minds, 2021–2022; n=85,769)

# Religious Retention

Much has been written about the decrease in religious affiliation in the United States during the most recent decades.<sup>41</sup> For example, the PRLS found that 78% of US adults identified as Christians in 2007, but that the number dropped to 71% by 2014 and then continued to drop, reaching 63% in 2024. Across the same period, those who identified as religiously unaffiliated rose from 16% in 2007 to 28% in 2024.<sup>42</sup> Religious scholars have identified 1991 as the crucial turning point, marking the beginning of a substantial drop in religious commitment.<sup>43</sup>

## Retention in 2024–2025 Across Generations

To estimate Latter-day Saint retention rates, we used the nationally representative PRLS and SSS data. We also explored retention of youth ages 12–18 using the longitudinal FFYD data. In table 3, we show retention rates in 2024

and 2025 from the PRLS, SSS, and FFYD. In the PRLS and SSS, approximately half of those who were raised Latter-day Saint continued to identify as Latter-day Saint as an adult. Looking specifically at youth in the FFYD, around three quarters of those who indicated they were a Latter-day Saint in 2016 (when they were 12–14 years old) also indicated they were a Latter-day Saint eight years later in 2024 (when they were 20–22 years old). It should be noted that retention is likely much lower in the PRLS and SSS than the FFYD because the PRLS and SSS contain those of all age groups and the FFYD contains only those in their late teens to early 20s. In other words, there was less time for religious change to occur for these younger Latter-day Saints.

We then examined how retention rates may differ across religions. As noted in the introduction, the comparison group for retention is important. We therefore made comparisons to the most specific level of analysis we were able,

**Table 3. Latter-day Saint Retention Rate Across Surveys**

	Retention Rate	Sample Size
Pew Religious Landscape Study (2024) <sup>a</sup>	49.4% (45%–54%)	727
Spiritual Seismology Survey (2025) <sup>a</sup>	53.3% (51%–56%)	1668
Family Foundations Youth Development (2016–2024) <sup>b</sup>	75.7% (71%–80%)	329

<sup>a</sup> Retention rate represents the percentage of those who indicated they were Latter-day Saint as a teen and still identify as Latter-day Saint when they took the survey (SSS or Pew) as an adult.

<sup>b</sup> Retention rate represents the percentage of youth who were Latter-day Saint in 2016 who continued to identify as Latter-day Saint in 2024.

41. Other useful literature on religious deidentification includes Stephen Bullivant, *Nonverts: The Making of Ex-Christian America* (Oxford University Press, 2022); Jim Davis and Michael Graham with Ryan P. Burge, *The Great Dechurching: Who's Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?* (Zondervan, 2023); Abby Day, *Why Baby Boomers Turned from Religion: Shaping Belief and Belonging, 1945–2021* (Oxford University Press, 2022); Ryan T. Cragun and Jesse M. Smith, *Goodbye Religion: The Causes and Consequences of Secularization* (NYU Press, 2024).

42. Smith and others, *Decline of Christianity*, 20.

43. Smith, *Why Religion Went Obsolete*, 13.

**Today's LDS retention rate (~50%) is higher than every Christian denomination except Catholics and Orthodox Christians.**

denominations or religious families (as defined by the PRLS). For the most part in the PRLS data, the smallest unit of analysis is religious family (for example, Baptist family, Lutheran family, and others). This level of analysis with the PRLS is not ideal given that it would still count as retention if a denomination within a religious family lost members to another denomination within the same family. Thus, the retention rates of these families are higher than retention rates for the individual denominations within the religious families. We exclude denominations with fewer than 200 respondents from our comparisons, since small sample sizes produce large margins of error—especially when comparing across generations.

In figure 16, we used the PRLS data and compared retention rates across religions in 2024. The highest retention rate is for Hindus and then Muslims, Jews, Orthodox

Christians, Catholics, Latter-day Saints, and Baptists. However, the Latter-day Saint rate is not significantly different from Catholics. Latter-day Saints have a higher retention rate than other Christian religions (except Orthodox Christian and Catholics) and Buddhists. However, with the confidence intervals, Latter-day Saints are statistically the same as Catholics and Baptists. Given that nonparticipation in an organization is conceptually and practically different from participating in an organization, we did not include those who identify as “unaffiliated” (meaning there is no religious organization to which they belong) in figure 16. However, we did examine the stability of such religious nonparticipation, finding that 74% of those raised nonreligious remain nonreligious as adults, comparable to the retention rate of Muslims, Hindus, and Catholics.

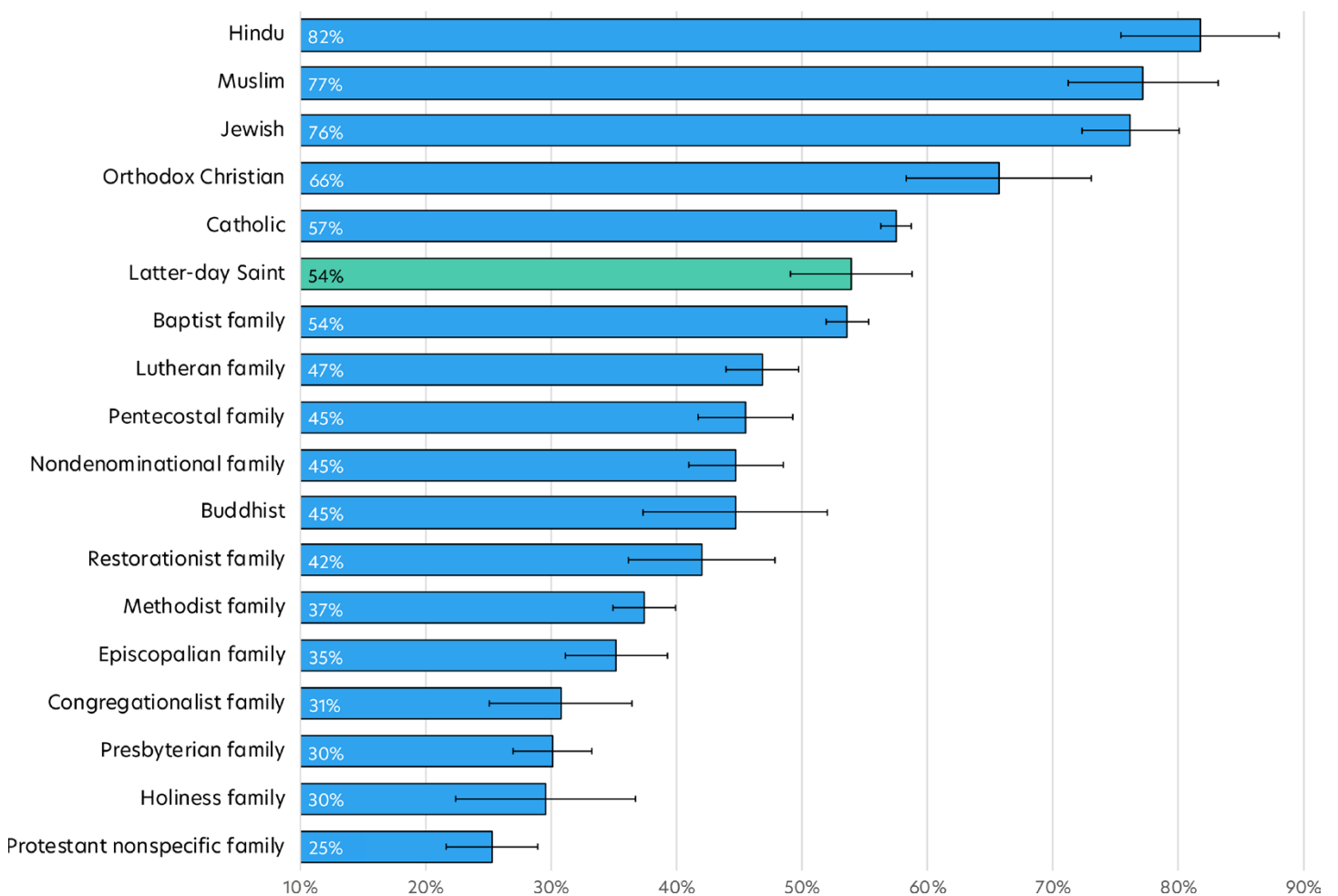


Figure 16. Retention Rates Across Religions (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=35,867)

## Retention Across Time

We also explored how Latter-day Saint retention rates have changed over time. We did so using the GSS data. Although the GSS contains fewer Latter-day Saints than the other surveys, it is the only survey where retention can be estimated back to the 1980s. When estimating retention in the 2000s, the best data come from the PRLS and SSS data. However, one cannot use those data to examine changes in retention across several decades. As with the above, we define “retention” as someone saying they were a Latter-day Saint as a teen, and as an adult they continue identifying as a Latter-day Saint. Importantly, this is independent of how active they were as a Latter-day Saint during their teenage years.

As found in the GSS data, in the 1980s, we calculated Latter-day Saint retention at 82%. That is, 82% of those who were raised Latter-day Saint indicated that they still identified as Latter-day Saint as adults. This identification number dropped slightly to 76% by the 1990s and then more steeply to 58% by the 2000s. In line with religious identification trends broadly, by the 2010s and beyond, the retention rate was slightly less than half at 46%. The rate of 46% from the GSS is similar to what was reported above from the PRLS and SSS data, which put the retention rate at just over 50% in 2024 and 2025.

Using the GSS, we also explored how active participation has changed over time for those raised Latter-day Saint. In 1980, 65% of those raised Latter-day Saint attended religious services at least monthly, while 16% attended several times a year or less and 19% no longer identified as Latter-day Saint. Over the following decades, the percentage of those who attended a few times a year or less but continued to identify as Latter-day Saint decreased. From 2010 to 2024, only 7% of those raised Latter-day Saint continued to identify as Latter-day Saint when they attended church a few times a year or less. This suggests that today, Latter-day Saints who do not attend church are less likely to identify as Latter-day Saint than they were in the past. It may be that the increased negative perception of religion in general (or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in particular)<sup>44</sup> makes it less desirable to identify as actively religious.<sup>45</sup> In

44. Smith, *Why Religion Went Obsolete*, 182, 229.

45. Smith, *Why Religion Went Obsolete*, 229–76.

the past, people may have identified with a particular religion even though they were not attending church, whereas today, continuing to identify may come with an increase in perceived social costs.<sup>46</sup>

## Retention for Younger Generations

Using the GSS, we also explored how Latter-day Saint Millennial+ retention rates compare to retention rates of previous generations. Retention rates across the generations decreased from the 1990s to the 2000s. Boomers retention held steady from the 2000s to the 2010s, while Millennial+ had the greatest drop in retention, from just over 60% in the 2000s to just above 40% in the 2010s. We should note that many Millennial+ were still young prior to the 2000s and therefore did not have as much time to leave their religion than those of other generations. These data also do not provide insights into individuals who may have returned to religious faith later in life.

## Active Retention

We were not only interested in whether an adult continues to identify with their childhood religion but whether he or she is, to some extent, engaged in that religion as an adult.<sup>47</sup> In figure 17, we broke down retention by frequency of religious service attendance. We divided PRLS respondents who were raised Latter-day Saint into three groups: (1) those who continue to identify as Latter-day Saint as adults and attend religious services at least monthly, (2) those who continue to identify as Latter-day Saint as adults but attend religious services only a few times a year or less, and (3) those who no longer identify as Latter-day Saint. We did the same for those raised in other religions, examining continued identification and religious service attendance together.

46. At the same time costs of continuing to identify with a religion may have increased, relatedly, the costs of not identifying have decreased. In earlier decades it was seen as personally and socially unacceptable not to identify with a religion. However, as Wilkins-Laflamme notes, individuals can stay away from religion and spirituality “with little or tolerable social penalty.” Wilkins-Laflamme, *Religion, Spirituality and Secularity Among Millennials*, 15.

47. We note that some of the religion categories in figure 17 overlap with ethnic and cultural identities. This may be the case with those who indicate they are Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, and even Catholic. It is therefore useful to examine not only how they identify but also what their level of religious involvement is.

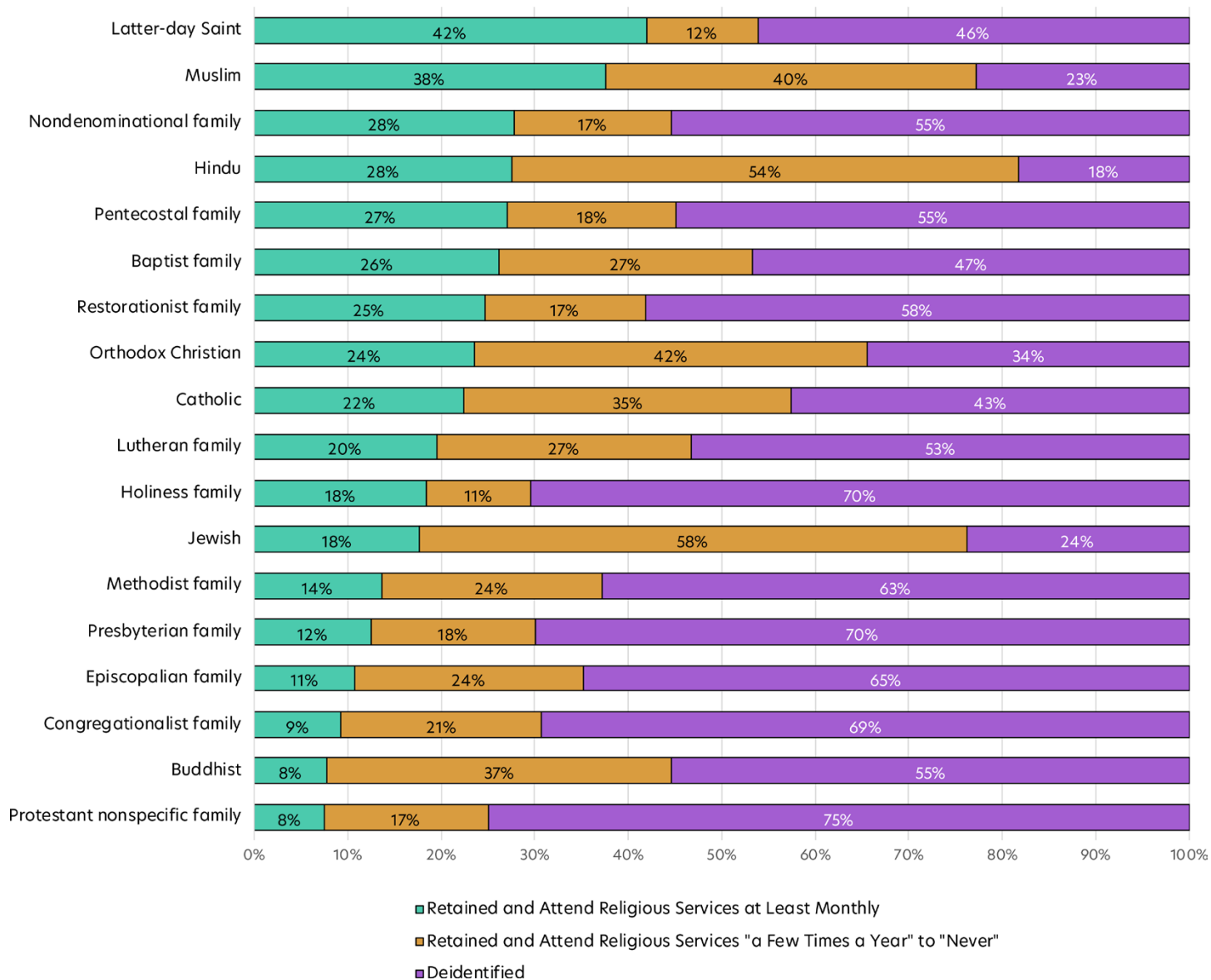


Figure 17. Retention and Religious Service Attendance (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024)

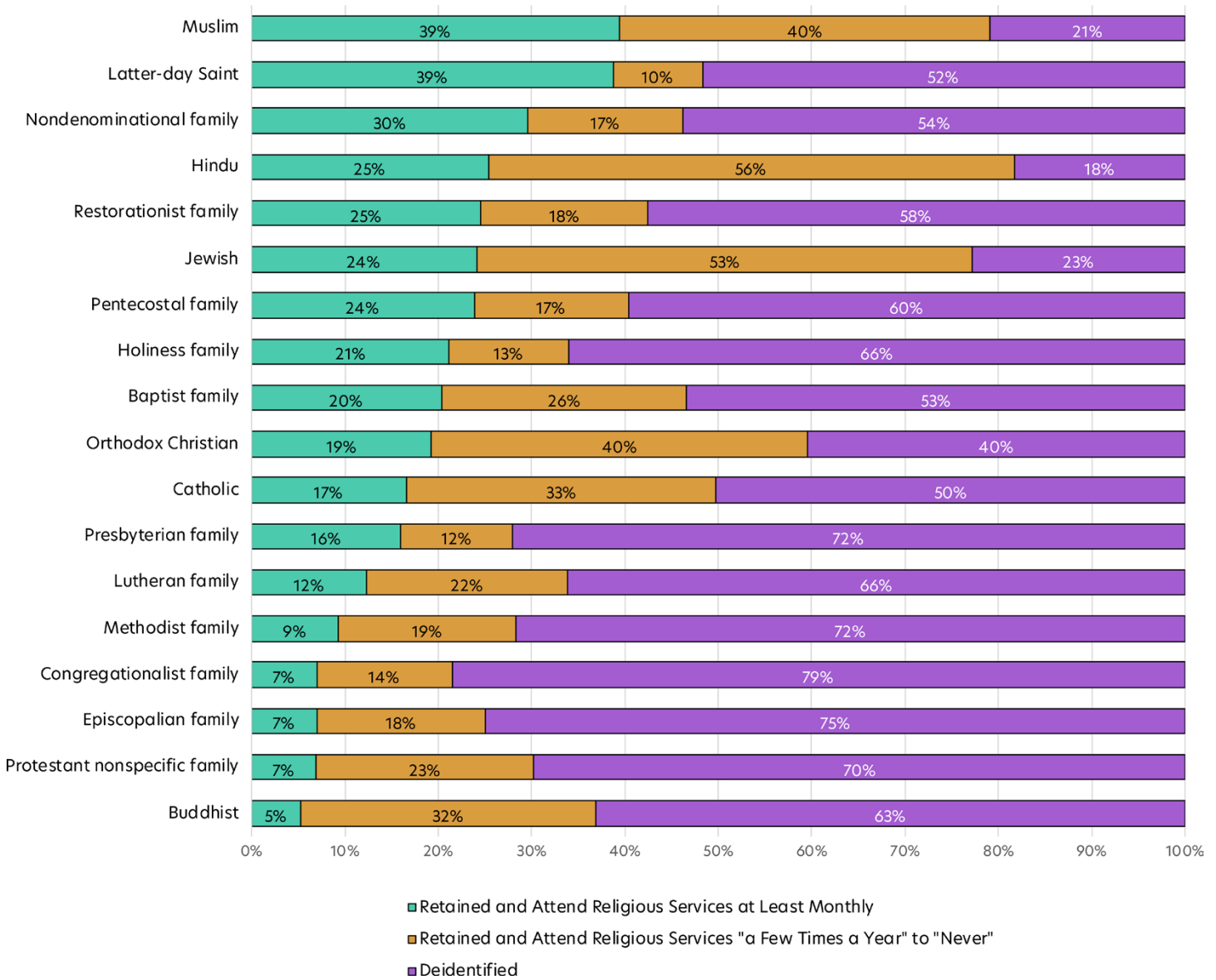
At 42%, Latter-day Saints have the highest percentage of retention (i.e., continuing to identify as a Latter-day Saint as an adult) and monthly attendance of any religion. This is followed by Muslims at 38%, then Nondenominational at 28%. For Jews, who are the third highest in overall retention, only 18% of respondents are retained *and* attend monthly.

Essentially, it is a minority of Latter-day Saints who do not attend at least monthly and still identify as Latter-day Saint (12%). In contrast, Jews, Hindus, and Muslims all

have substantial numbers (around half) of adherents who were raised in these religions and still identify as such but attend religious services a few times a year or never. For these religions, expectations for attending religious services may differ from Latter-day Saints, where frequent attendance is emphasized. These findings indicate the importance of attendance as a feature of identifying as Latter-day Saint.

We conducted the same analysis for Millennial+ (born in or after 1980) with similar trends observed. As indicated in figure 18, Latter-day Saint Millennial+ are statistically even with Muslims in the percentage retained who also attend services at least monthly (39%). The next closest is the Nondenominational family at 30%.

**42% of those raised Latter-day Saint still identify and attend monthly—the highest active-retention rate of any religion.**



**Figure 18.** Millennial+ Retention and Religious Service Attendance (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024)

## Retention by Demographics

We examined whether retention rates among Latter-day Saints differ across a host of demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, income, race, and location of residence.

### Gender and Age

Using the GSS, we compared the retention rates of Latter-day Saint women with Latter-day Saint men over time. Latter-day Saint men's retention rate remained steady at just over 80% from the 1980s to the 1990s and then dropped to just under 50% in the 2000s. It then declined only slightly through 2024 (combining those years together). In comparison, Latter-day Saint women's retention rate remained stable at just under 70% from the 1990s to the 2000s and then declined to just under 50% from the 2000s through 2024.

We then explored whether retention rates differ by gender *and* age (fig. 19). Using the 2025 SSS data, we found that 18-year-old Latter-day Saint men have a retention rate of just below 60%, while older men have slightly higher rates, reaching just above 60% for the oldest men. In contrast, younger Latter-day Saint women have a much lower retention rate compared to older Latter-day Saint women: Eighteen-year-old Latter-day Saint women have

a retention rate of just below 40%, while the oldest Latter-day Saint women in the data have a 60% retention rate.

This finding suggests a striking generational difference for women, with younger women much less likely to continue identifying as Latter-day Saint than women of older generations. In contrast, men are nearly just as likely to stay in the faith no matter what generation they were born into. However, these data do not account for those who may have left the Church and returned. It may be that women are more likely to leave at younger ages but are also more likely to return later.

Using the PRLS, we also explored this in other religions (see appendix C). The findings were somewhat similar, with men's retention rate 10% higher than women's at ages 18–24 (fig. C1). However, this difference is not statistically significant, and at no age are men and women significantly different from each other. For women, the retention rate does significantly increase as women age. In other words, women at older ages are more likely to be retained than women at younger ages, there being an approximate 30% difference.

We also explored whether this age difference in retention is the same across various religious families (fig. C2). Latter-day Saint women follow similar retention trends with Catholics and Baptists (both in absolute level and in

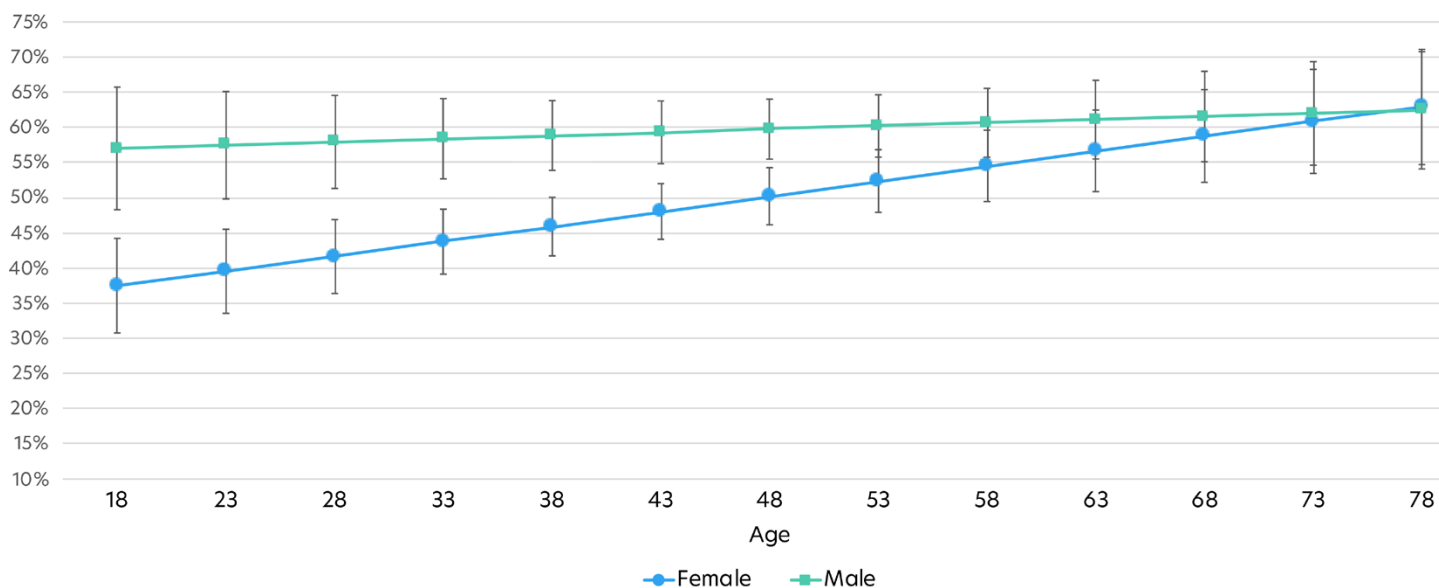


Figure 19. Latter-day Saint Retention Rate in 2025 by Gender and Age (Spiritual Seismology Survey Data; n=1,134)

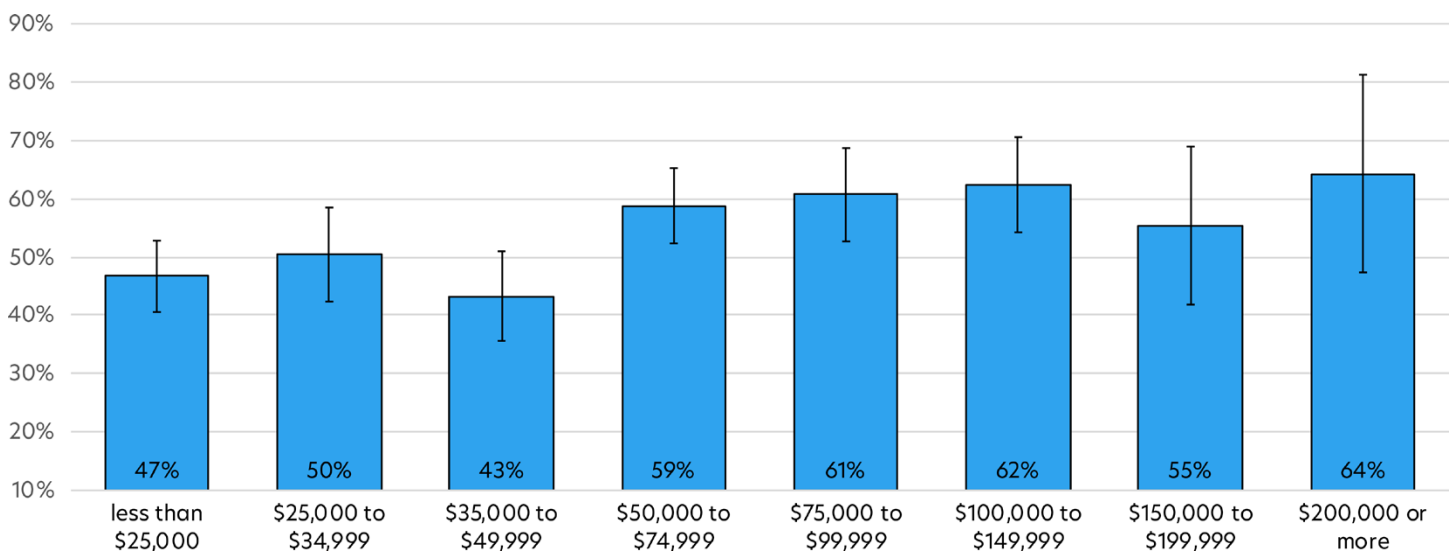
the retention rate increasing with age).<sup>48</sup> Female Latter-day Saints ages 18–24 are relatively average in their retention rate, though older Latter-day Saint women have the highest retention rate of any religious family. Given that their retention at 18–24 is average, Latter-day Saint women appear to have one of the largest generational differences, though other religious families follow a similar pattern. At the same time, we again note that when referring to a religious family’s retention rate, each denomination within that family will necessarily have a lower retention rate than the overall family due to individual members switching denominations within the family.

### Income and Education

Using the SSS data, we specified logistic regressions to see whether income and education levels are related to Latter-day Saint retention rates. We controlled for age because younger individuals will likely have lower incomes and

less education than older individuals. Figure 20 shows retention rates by categories of income in the SSS. Those making less than \$50,000 a year are 50% or lower in their retention rates, while those making above that are almost all close to 60% retention. We note that the two highest income categories have particularly large 95% confidence intervals making us less certain of their retention rates. Other research finds a similar relationship between religiousness and income, with religiousness increasing across income categories until the highest categories of income, where religiousness levels off or even decreases.<sup>49</sup>

Our analyses also showed that those with higher education are more likely to remain Latter-day Saint (fig. 20): Those who have less than a college degree have nearly a 50% retention rate, while those with a bachelor’s degree or some graduate school education have about a 60% retention rate. This trend fits with research that finds a positive correlation between religiousness and education level.<sup>50</sup>

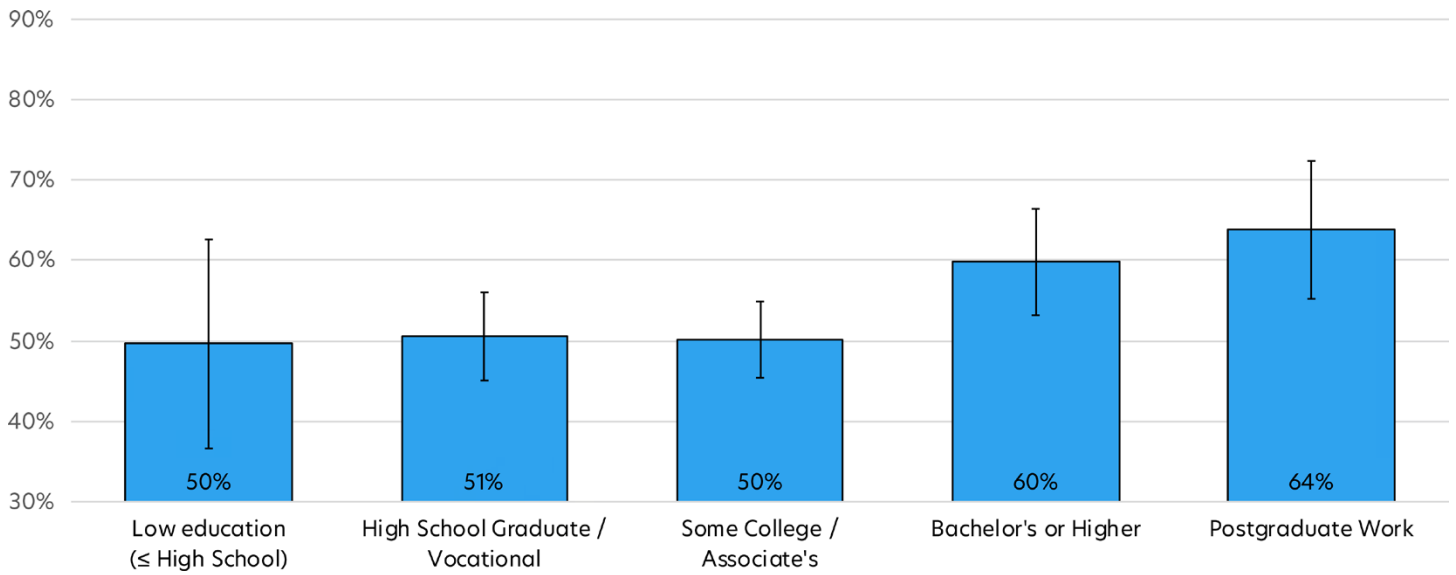


**Figure 20a.** Latter-day Saint Retention Rates Across Income and Education Categories (Spiritual Seismology Survey, 2025)

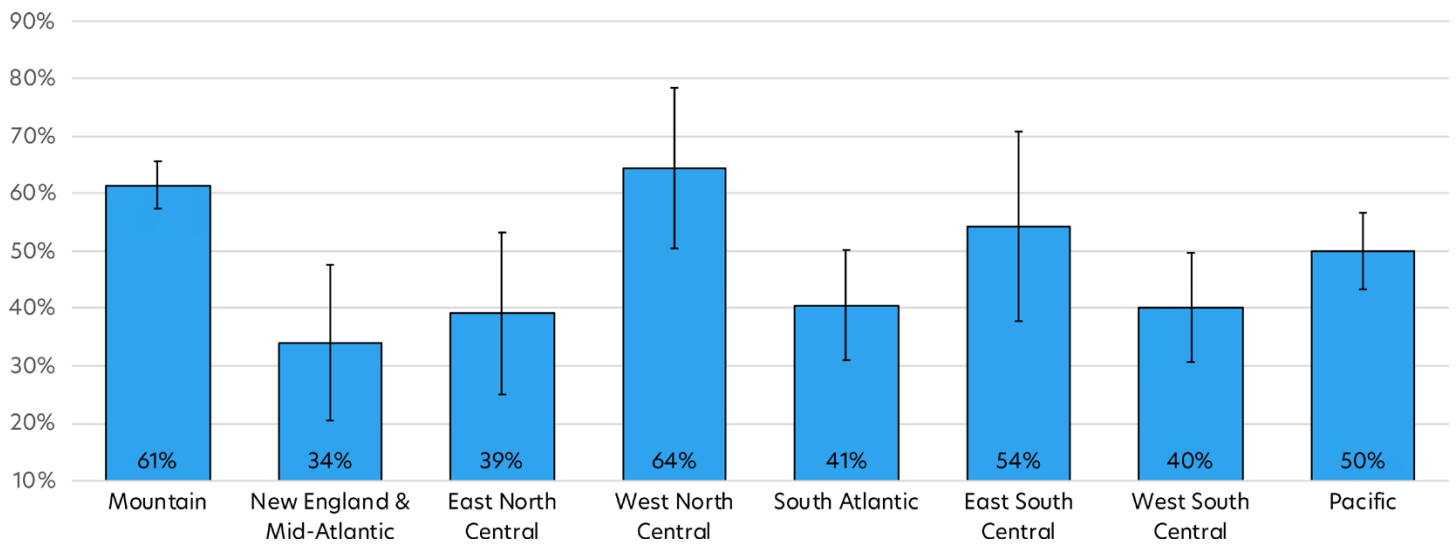
48. There were only three religious families where retention decreased as age increased: the Nondenominational family, the Holiness family, and the Presbyterian family.

49. Burge, *Vanishing Church*, 107.

50. Burge, *Vanishing Church*, 103.



**Figure 20b.** Latter-day Saint Retention Rates Across Income and Education Categories (Spiritual Seismology Survey, 2025)



**Figure 21.** Latter-day Saint Retention Rates by Census Region (Spiritual Seismology Survey, 2025)

## Race

In the SSS data, of those raised Latter-day Saint, 826 identified as White, 40 as Black, 180 as Hispanic, and 31 as Asian. Retention rates for these groups are as follows:

- White, 54%
- Black, 49%
- Hispanic, 50%
- Asian, 59%

There are no statistically significant differences in these percentages. However, given that the sample sizes of Blacks and Asians are rather low, comparisons with these demographics should be interpreted with caution.

## Location of Residence

Using the SSS, we divided the sampled individuals into the nine census regions:

- ▶ the New England region: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut
- ▶ the Middle Atlantic region: New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania
- ▶ the East North Central region: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin

- ▶ the West North Central region: Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas
- ▶ the South Atlantic region: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and the District of Columbia
- ▶ the East South Central region: Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi
- ▶ the West South Central region: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas
- ▶ the Mountain region: Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada
- ▶ the Pacific region: Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii

Because the New England region had only fifteen participants, we combined it with the Middle Atlantic region.

Figures 21–22 have retention rates for the various US regions. The Mountain and West North Central regions have the highest rates, while the lowest rates are in the New England and Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, and West South Central regions.

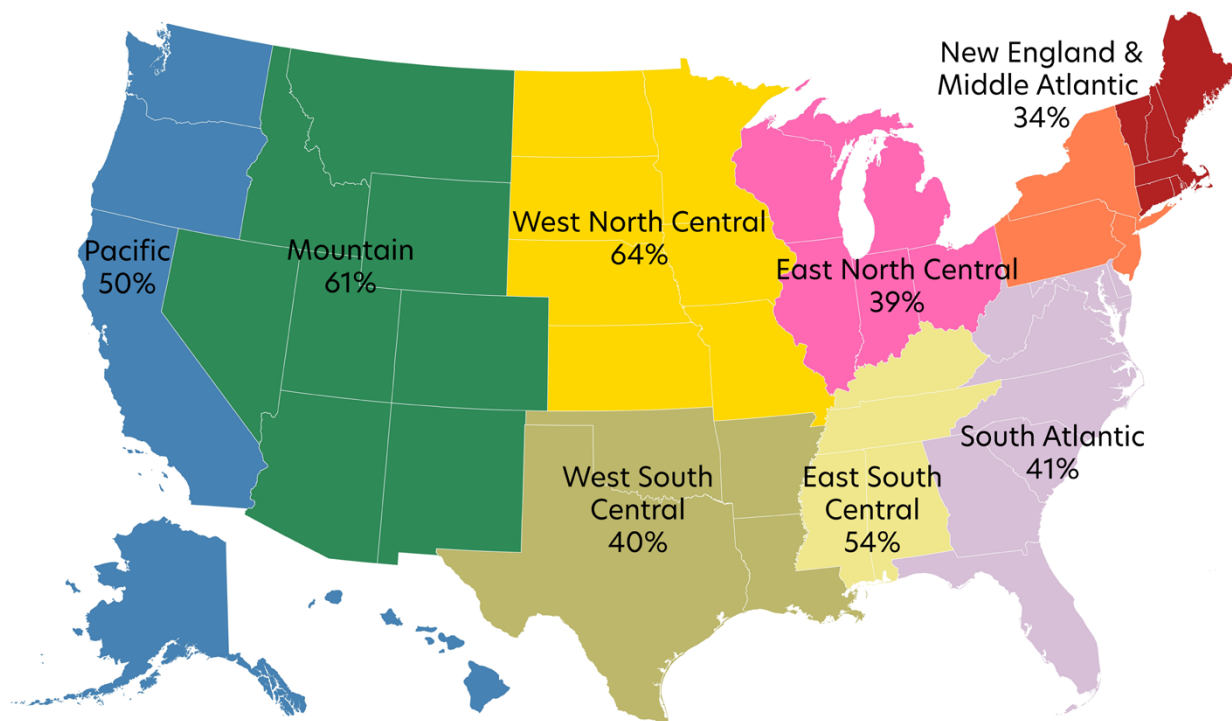


Figure 22. Map of Latter-day Saint Retention Rate by Census Region (Spiritual Seismology Survey, 2025)

## Predictors of Deidentification and Groups of Deidentifiers

We used the FFYD data to examine predictors of deidentifying as Latter-day Saint because, with these data, we could explore how earlier characteristics predict whether someone would deidentify later in life. Specifically, we looked at predictors of whether youth would deidentify as they transitioned into young adulthood between 2020 and 2024.

In these analyses, 709 youth identified as Latter-day Saint in 2020, with 92 (13%) no longer identifying as such by 2024. We examined whether the following characteristics in 2020 predicted deidentifying by 2024: parent education, parental divorce status, family income, parent and adolescent political views, adolescent depression, adolescent anxiety, and adolescent personality. We also included numerous adolescent religious behaviors: attending church, praying, reading scriptures, keeping the Sabbath day holy, attending seminary, attending the temple, researching ancestors, giving a talk or lesson in church, sharing religious beliefs with someone not of their faith, and spending time performing Church duties.<sup>51</sup>

We also examined more internal aspects of religion, such as whether adolescents felt a secure attachment to God, how often they felt God's presence, and whether they had a testimony that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church. Finally, we examined how support for somewhat controversial issues related to deidentification: whether adolescents felt women should be ordained to the priesthood, whether they thought the Church should fully accept same-sex marriage, the degree to which issues of Church history had troubled them, and the degree to which the Church's views on social and political issues had bothered them.

When we included all of the above in a logistic regression model<sup>52</sup> that predicted retention after four years

(between 2020 and 2024), the following significantly predicted greater likelihood of deidentifying: not feeling God's presence in one's daily life, agreeing that the Church should accept same-sex marriage, and feeling troubled by the Church's stance on political issues (see table 4). For those who almost never felt God in their daily lives, 24% deidentified.<sup>53</sup> However, for those who felt God's presence every day, only 4% deidentified. For those who strongly agreed that the Church should accept same-sex marriage, 28% deidentified, while only 5% of those who strongly disagreed deidentified.<sup>54</sup> Finally, for those who felt very concerned or troubled about the Church's stance on social and political issues, 22% deidentified, while fewer than 10% of those who felt little or no concern deidentified.

The relationship between political issues and religion is not unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Indeed, nationally, while only 17% of religiously affiliated individuals are liberal or very liberal, over 55% of Atheists/Agnostics are.<sup>55</sup> And this divide is relatively recent. Before the 1980s, unaffiliated individuals were just as likely to be Republican as Democrat. However, since then, the divide has widened such that Republicans are far more likely to be religious than Democrats.<sup>56</sup>

Many of the characteristics we examined did not significantly predict deidentifying. However, this does not necessarily mean they are unrelated to religious deidentification. What these analyses suggest is that if a characteristic does play a significant role in deidentification, it would be through its effect on experiencing God's presence and on the individual's social/political views (see table 4).<sup>57</sup> For example, although scripture reading in 2020 did not have a direct relationship with deidentification, scripture reading may impact deidentification by increasing the feeling of God's presence in an adolescent's daily life or by decreasing the trouble felt from his or her religion's views

51. It should be noted that 2020 was during the COVID lockdowns. Regarding religious behaviors, participants were asked to report on these behaviors before they experienced pandemic restrictions on in-person gatherings.

52. This was a logistic regression conducted in Mplus 9 with multiple imputation (50 imputations) to handle missing data. Analyses were iterative where nonsignificant predictors were removed from the model and significant predictors retained.

53. Marginal percentages calculated from a logistic regression conducted in Stata 19.

54. See appendix D for possible impacts of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints changing its stance on same-sex marriage.

55. Smith and others, *Decline of Christianity*, 235.

56. Michele F. Margolis, *From Politics to the Pews: How Partisanship and the Political Environment Shape Religious Identity* (University of Chicago Press, 2018), 86, 96–102.

57. This would be a "mediation model" that is beyond the scope of this report.

**Table 4. Statistically Significant Predictors of Deidentifying Between 2020 and 2024 from a Logistic Regression**  
**(Marginal Percentages: Family Foundations of Youth Development Study; n=709)**

Predictors of Deidentification	% Deidentified	Odds Ratio
The following questions deal with possible spiritual experiences. To what extent can you say you experience the following? (for example) I feel God's presence. I ask for God's help in the middle of daily activities. I find strength and comfort in my religion. I feel God's love for me. (Responses to these items were averaged for an overall score.)		
Many times a day	3%	.601
Every day	4%	
Most days	7%	
Some days	11%	
Once in a while	17%	
Never or almost never	24%	
Thinking of the church or religious group you belong to, how much do you agree with the following statement? They should fully accept same-sex marriage.		
Strongly disagree	5%	1.54
Somewhat disagree	8%	
Neither agree nor disagree	13%	
Somewhat agree	19%	
Strongly agree	28%	
How much are you concerned or troubled by the following? Your religion's views on social or political issues (such as homosexuality, same-sex marriage, contraception, abortion, or legalization of marijuana).		
Not at all	5%	1.63
A little	7%	
Somewhat	11%	
Quite a bit	15%	
Very much	22%	

*Note.* Predictors of deidentifying were specified as continuous. Odds ratios represent the change in the likelihood of deidentification at each level of a predictor variable. An odds ratio greater than 1.00 indicates a positive relationship between the predictor and the outcome, meaning higher levels of the predictor are associated with increased odds of deidentification. An odds ratio less than 1.00 indicates a negative relationship, meaning higher levels of the predictor are associated with decreased odds.

on social and political issues. The statistically significant predictors we identified in table 4 are likely the most proximal influences on deidentification.

### Digital Media

While digital media can enable religious leaders to expand their reach, digital technology also encourages individuals to explore a plurality of religious ideas and feel less bound to or trusting in specific religious institutions or belief systems.<sup>58</sup> For young adults, more social media use was linked to a “pick and choose” approach to faith, an increase in being religiously unaffiliated, and less certainty in the exclusive truth of one’s religion.<sup>59</sup> For adolescents with religious parents, more screen time was linked with diminished religious commitment and decreased scripture reading.<sup>60</sup>

As with the analyses in table 4, we used the FFYD data in a logistic regression to examine whether the following were related to deidentification: smartphone ownership (11% of the sample did not own a smartphone), hours spent watching video clips (like on YouTube), and hours spent on social media platforms. We controlled for gender and parental income (as families with higher incomes may have had more access to devices and media). We included all variables in the same model to control for each other. We used the 2020 levels of these variables to predict whether an adolescent would deidentify as Latter-day Saint by 2024. (In 2020, all youth identified as Latter-day Saint.)

From the FFYD data, we found that owning a smartphone was related to a statistically significant greater likelihood of deidentification by 2024. Youth with a smartphone were nearly three times more likely to deidentify (13.0%) compared to those without a smartphone (4.9%). The amount of

time spent watching video clips was also statistically related to deidentification: While only 7.6% of those who watched no video clips deidentified, 12.1% of those who watched one hour a day deidentified, 16.3% of those who watched two hours a day deidentified, and 21.6% of those who watched three hours a day deidentified.

It is worth noting that when we put these digital media variables in a logistic regression with daily spiritual experiences and social and political concerns (see table 4), they were no longer statistically significant. This may indicate that digital media has an influence on retention through its impact on spiritual experiences. Indeed, as mentioned above, research has found that digital media use relates to lower religious commitment and less engagement in religious activities.<sup>61</sup> Digital media may also increase dissonance between youth and their religion’s positions on social issues by negatively portraying such positions.

### Religious Patterns After Deidentifying

To better understand Latter-day Saints who chose to deidentify, we explored their religious beliefs and behaviors after they deidentified. Using the SSS and PRLS data, we could see how former Latter-day Saints currently identified religiously. In the SSS, we found that 30% identified with another Christian religion (such as Protestant or Catholic), 15% identified with some other religion (such as Buddhism or Islam), 26% identified as Atheist/Agnostic, and 29% identified as “nothing in particular.” In other words, almost half switched to another (primarily Christian) religion, 1 in 4 became Atheist/Agnostic, and about 1 in 3 were ambivalent. When compared to other religions, those raised Latter-day Saint become religiously unaffiliated at a similar rate as those raised in other Christian religions.

In the PRLS data, 28% of those raised Latter-day Saint were unaffiliated with religion later in life. (Given the different data and somewhat different definition of being religiously unaffiliated, this will differ from the SSS numbers.) For other Christian religions, of those raised in their religious tradition, between 15% and 31% become unaffiliated with any religion later in life.<sup>62</sup>

---

58. Oren Golan and Nurit Stadler, “Building the Sacred Community Online: The Dual Use of the Internet by Chabad,” *Media, Culture & Society* 38, no. 1 (2016): 71–88, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443715615415>; Jeremy E. Uecker and Paul K. McClure, “Screen Time, Social Media, and Religious Commitment Among Adolescents,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2023): 250–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00380253.2022.2089270>.

59. Paul K. McClure, “Faith and Facebook in a Pluralistic Age: The Effects of Social Networking Sites on the Religious Beliefs of Emerging Adults,” *Sociological Perspectives* 59, no. 4 (2016): 825, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121416647361>.

60. Uecker and McClure, “Screen Time, Social Media, and Religious Commitment,” 265–67.

---

61. Uecker and McClure, “Screen Time, Social Media, and Religious Commitment,” 250–73.

62. Smith and others, *Decline of Christianity*, 110.

## Groups Among Latter-day Saints Who Deidentified

Deidentification findings reported thus far have provided a picture of averages, such as determining, on average, whether those who deidentify are more likely to live in the Mountain region or the Pacific region. Yet, as Jan Stets and James Heft state, it is important to avoid overly simplistic views of those who deidentify from their religion.<sup>63</sup> To better understand the diversity within deidentified Latter-day Saints, we conducted sophisticated latent class analyses based on a variety of traits to identify groups of those who deidentified.<sup>64</sup> For this, we used the SSS data, which contains 527 individuals ranging in age from 18 to 95 who were raised Latter-day Saint but did not identify as such as adults (at least, not when they took the survey).

Distinct groups of those who deidentified as Latter-day Saint emerged from the data based on the following: how important religion and spirituality was to them, how warm they felt toward Latter-day Saints, whether they believed that death is the end of existence, whether they believed Jesus is the Son of God, and whether they felt religion has a place in society. Participants were also able to select reasons why they no longer identified with the Church. They could select any or all of the following reasons: getting out of the habit of attending church due to COVID-19 lockdowns, moving, no longer believing the tenets of the religion, finding religious affiliation inconvenient, prioritizing other activities, and not feeling love from the members.

Our analyses identified four groups,<sup>65</sup> two of which felt religion was still an important part of their lives and two that did not (fig. 23). We refer to the first two groups as “Faith Staying” (22% of the sample) and “Faith Bordering” (32% of the sample). For these groups, religion and

spirituality were still important. For the Faith Staying, the most common reasons for deidentifying were that they had moved or that Church affiliation had become inconvenient (fig. 24). They felt relatively warm toward Latter-day Saints, believed that Jesus is the Son of God, and felt that religion should play some part in society. Of these, only 3% indicated they were Atheist/Agnostic (fig. 25). Most of them identified with another religion, primarily Christian religions (70%). Given that they felt positively toward religion and Latter-day Saints and still held central beliefs, Faith Staying may have simply “drifted away” from the Church due to various life circumstances that made it difficult to stay connected. Most began identifying with another denomination, perhaps one more convenient to the location they moved to.

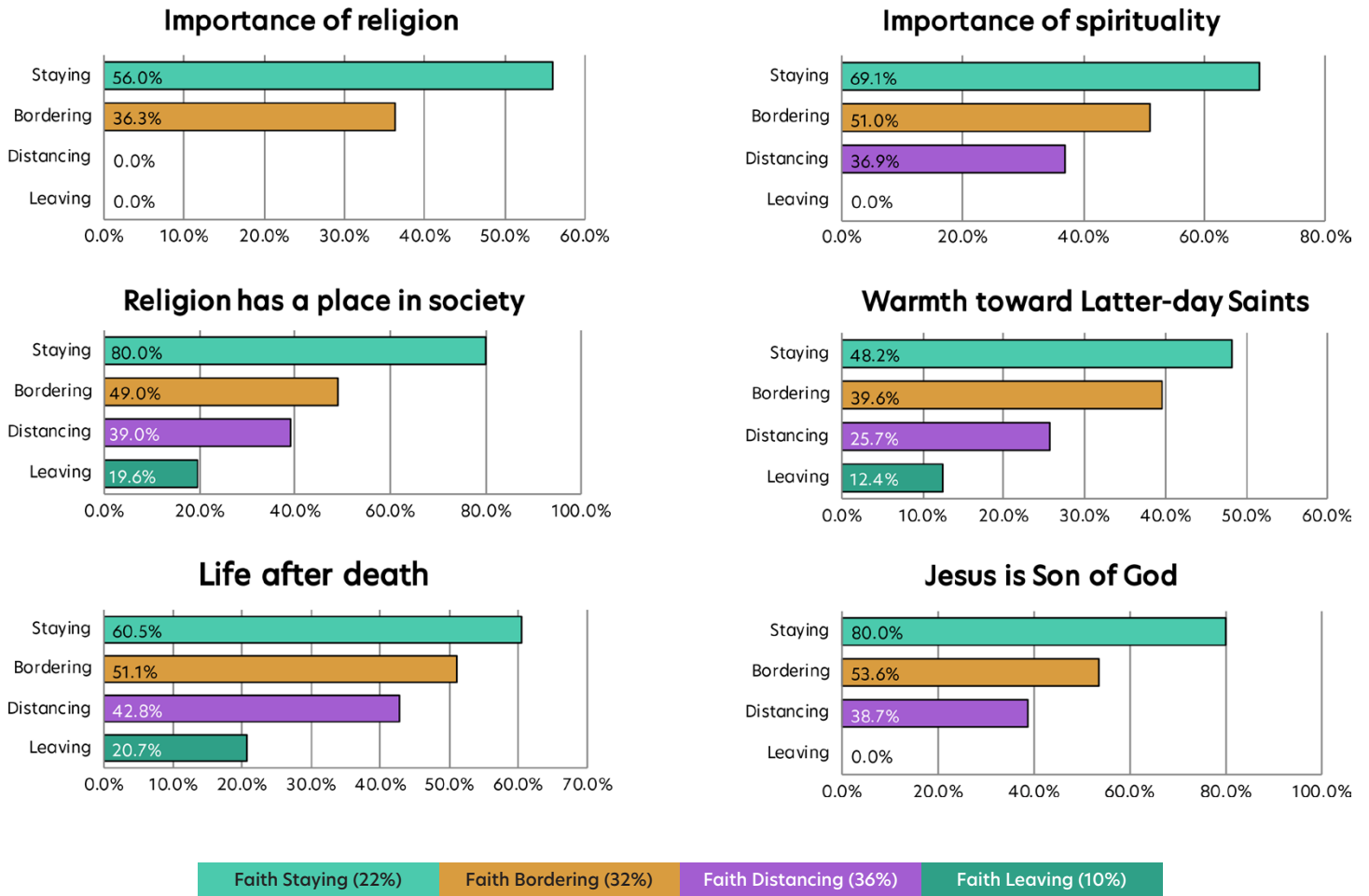
Compared to Faith Staying, Faith Bordering felt religion and spirituality were somewhat less important and were more likely to have left the Church because they did not believe or they felt religion was not as high a priority to them. While they still felt somewhat warm toward Latter-day Saints, they were less likely to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and seemed more skeptical that religion should have a place in society (fig. 23). They were more likely to identify as Atheist/Agnostic (9%), and 30% of them identified as “nothing in particular.” However, 57% identified with another religion. (For most of these, it was another Christian religion. See fig. 25.) These individuals seem to have lost connection with religious beliefs, and with other priorities emerging, they chose to no longer identify as Latter-day Saint. At the same time, they appear to be leaning toward faith, though they were less connected to it than the Faith Staying.

---

63. Jan E. Stets and James L. Heft, “Epilogue,” in *Empty Churches: Non-Affiliation in America*, ed. James L. Heft and Jan E. Stets (Oxford University Press, 2021), 344–46.

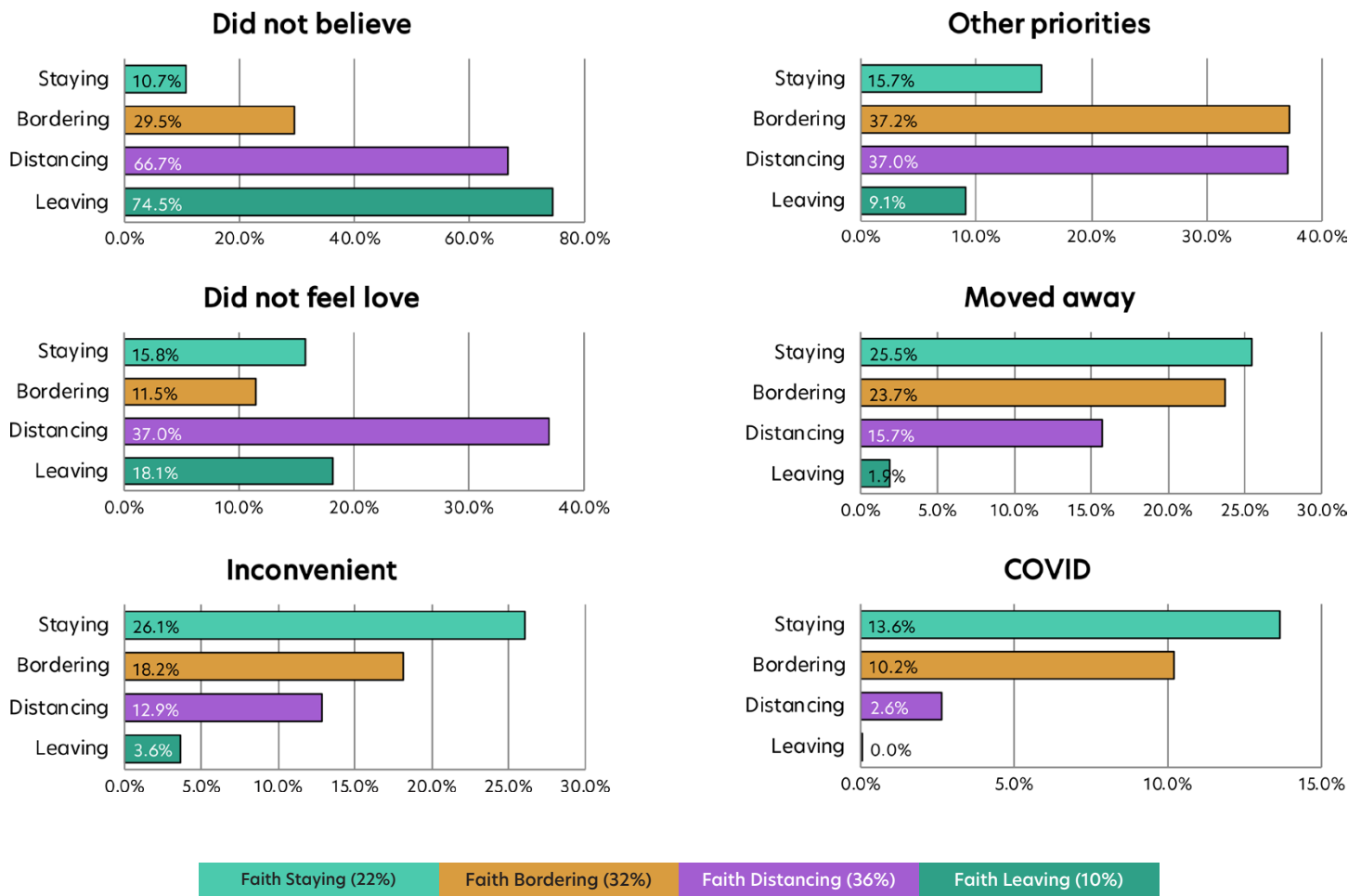
64. Additional details of the analysis can be found in appendix E.

65. This was a latent profile analysis conducted in LatentGold 6.1 with FIML used to handle missing data. There was substantial improvement in model fit from 1–4 classes and then small improvements thereafter. Classification errors were small, though doubled from the four to five class solution. Entropy of the four-class solution was excellent at .99. We determined that the four-class solution was ideal and report that here. Additional details of these analyses are available from Justin Dyer.



**Figure 23.** Groups of Those Who No Longer Identify as Latter-day Saint by Their Beliefs and Attitudes

*Percentages show how close each group's average fell to the top of that item's scale. Because items used different scale lengths, this approach makes them comparable to one another.*



**Figure 24.** Groups of Those Who No Longer Identify as Latter-day Saint by Their Reasons for Leaving  
*Percentages are simple proportions: the share of each group who cited that reason*

The other two groups, “Faith Distancing” (36% of the sample) and “Faith Leaving” (10% of the sample), both indicated religion was not at all important to them. The most prominent reason for these two groups no longer identifying as Latter-day Saint was nonbelief. Faith Distancing still placed at least some importance on spirituality and maintained some, though seemingly tepid, religious beliefs (such as death not being the end and Jesus being the son of God); they were also tepid about religion having a place in society. Forty-one percent of them identified as Atheist/Agnostic, and 40% identified as “nothing in particular” (fig. 25). These individuals seem to have lost any interest in and are somewhat skeptical of organized religion. However, they still place some value in “spirituality,” somewhat believing in life after death. But their primary reason for deidentifying was not believing. It is notable they also were the highest in

selecting “did not feel love” from their religion as a reason for deidentifying (fig. 24). This may have been part of the reason for their soured relationship with religion.

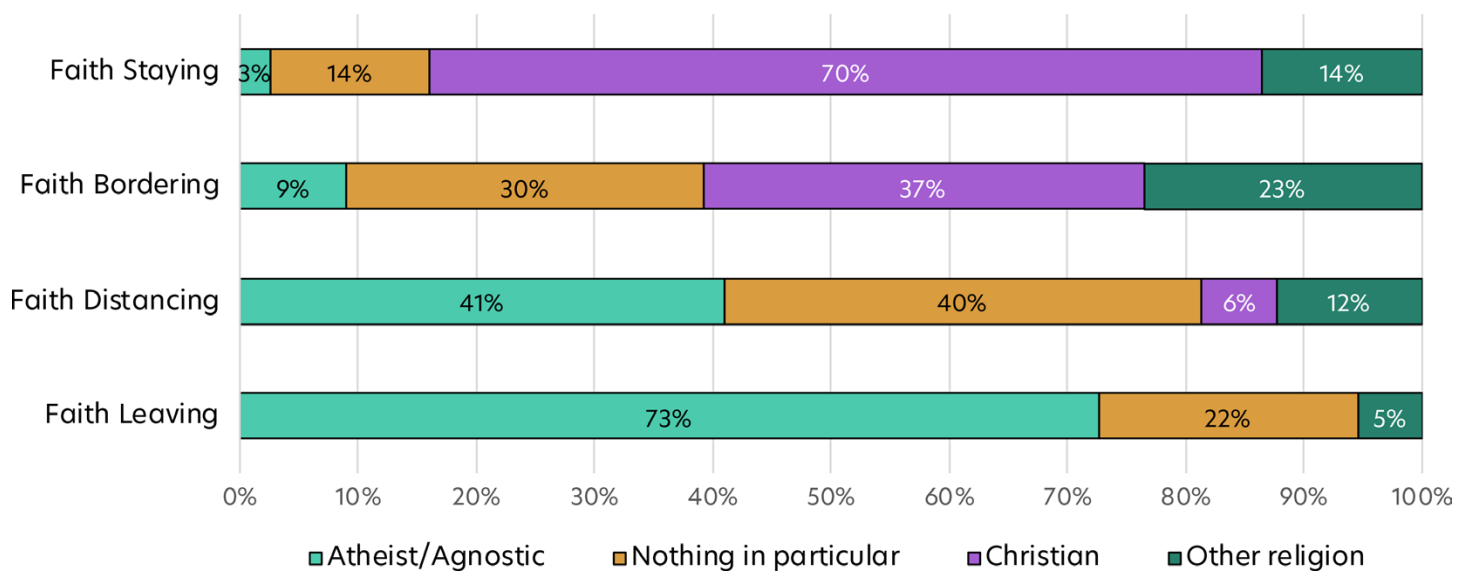
The Faith Leaving placed no importance on either religion or spirituality. They had the lowest warmth toward Latter-day Saints, felt that death is the end, and had no belief that Jesus is the Son of God. They were also the most likely to believe that religion has no place in society (fig. 23). Of this group, 73% identified as Atheist/Agnostic, while 22% identified as “nothing in particular.” None of them identified as part of a Christian religion. These individuals seem to be entirely disconnected from a religious or spiritual view of the world and left the Church primarily because of their rejection of religious beliefs.

We also explored other characteristics of these groups, including age, gender, sexual orientation, education level,

income level, relationship status, church attendance frequency in childhood, current region of residence, the percentage of religious adherents in their counties, political ideology, and experience of abuse in a religious context (physical, psychological, or sexual). We also examined whether they had any adverse childhood experiences, which included experiencing things such as parental divorce, abuse by someone living in the home, residence with someone who had a drug problem, residence with anyone who had been incarcerated, and other experiences. When included in the same statistical model, the following

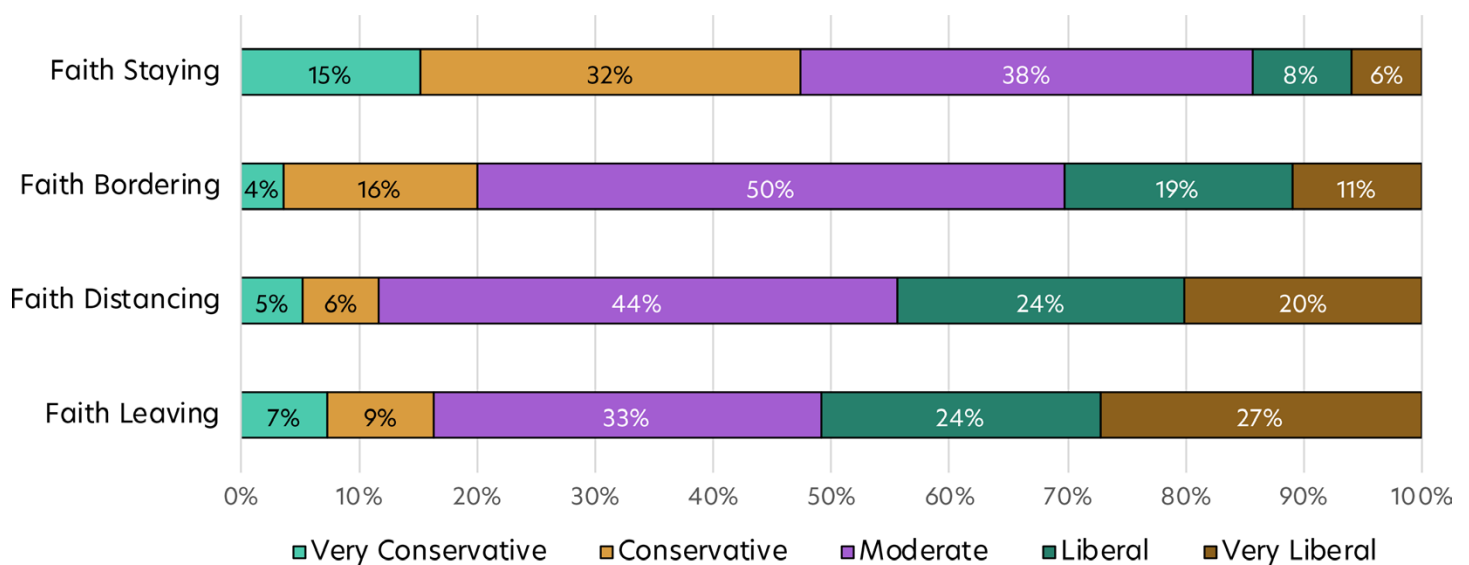
significantly differentiated the four groups (Faith Staying, Faith Bordering, Faith Distancing, and Faith Leaving): political ideology, relationship status, region of residence, adverse childhood experiences, and abuse experienced in a religious context.

In terms of political ideology (fig. 26), Faith Staying were the most conservative group, with 47% either conservative or very conservative and only 14% liberal or very liberal. Every other group had less than half that percentage of conservatives, and 51% of Faith Leaving were liberal or very liberal.



**Figure 25.** Current Religious/Nonreligious Identification for Those Who No Longer Identify as Latter-day Saint.

*Note:* The term “Christian” includes Catholic, Nondenominational Christian, Protestant, Orthodox Christian, and “Other Christian.”



**Figure 26.** Political Ideology Across Groups of Those No Longer Identifying as Latter-day Saint

In terms of relationship status (fig. 27), Faith Staying were the most likely to be married or partnered (50%). In contrast, Faith Leaving were the least likely to be married or partnered (35%). This follows other research finding that religious individuals are more likely to be married than nonreligious individuals.<sup>66</sup>

In terms of region of residence (fig. 28), Faith Staying were the least likely to live inside Utah or Idaho (16% live in Utah or Idaho). Faith Distancing and Faith Leaving were the most likely to live in those locations (30% and 25%, respectively).

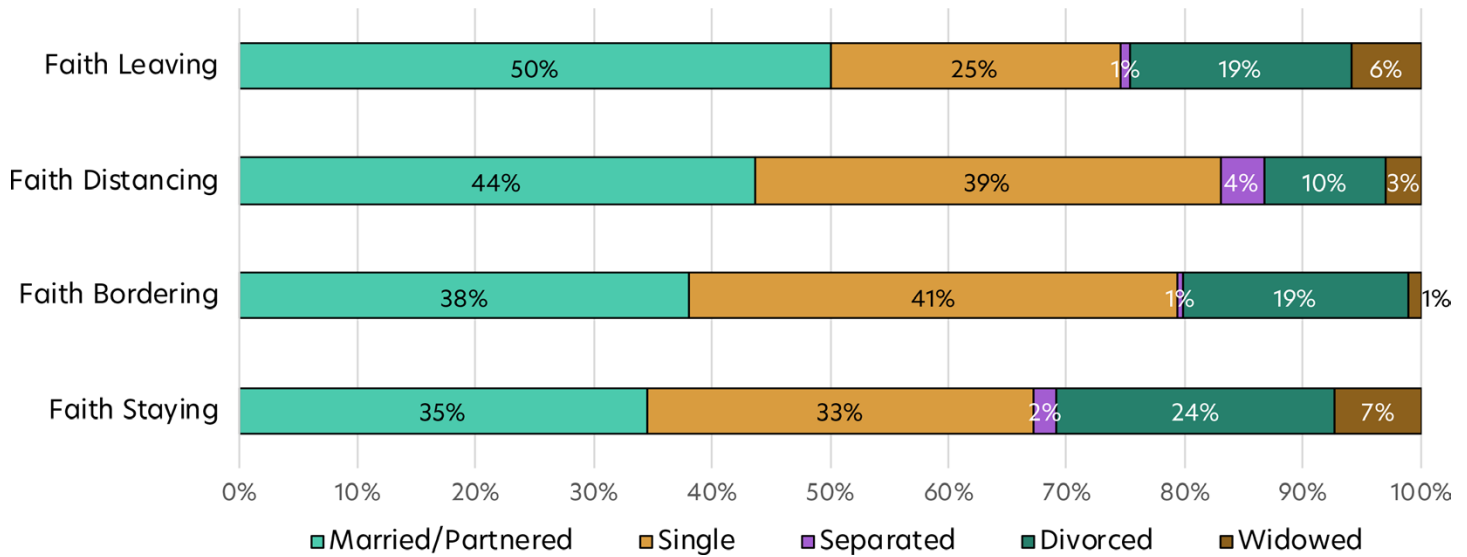


Figure 27. Relationship Status by Group

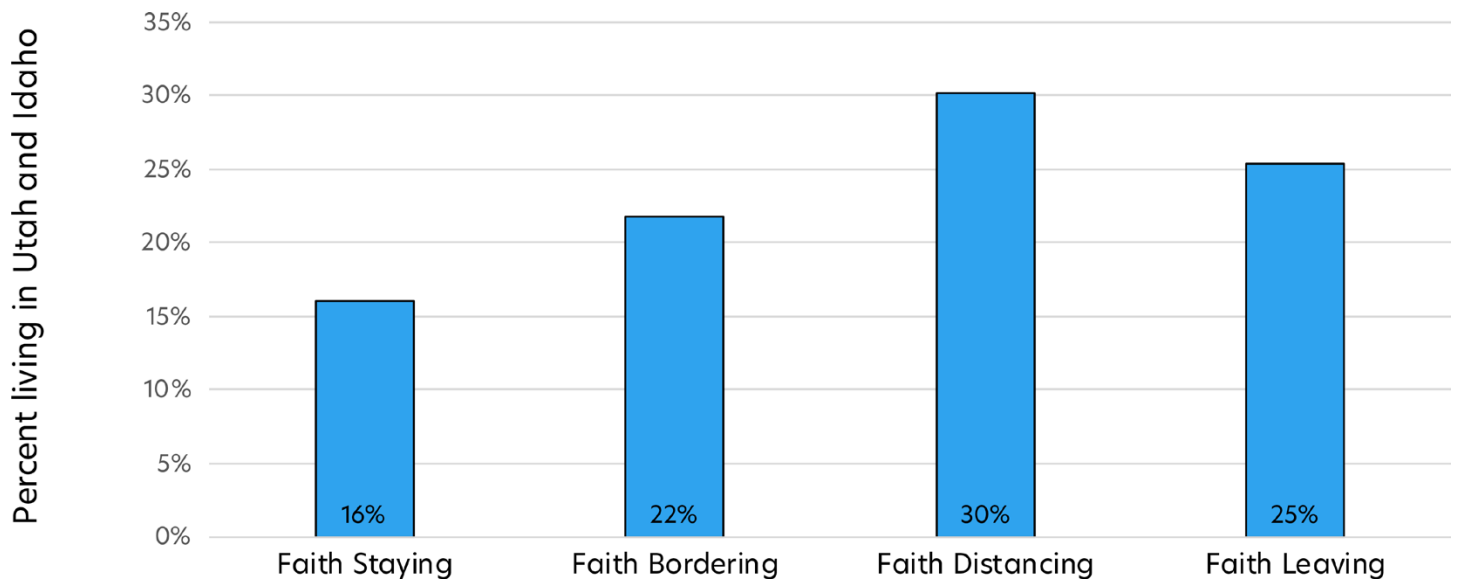


Figure 28. Percentage of Deidentified Latter-day Saints that Live in Utah or Idaho

66. Merrill Silverstein, Woosang Hwang, Jeung-Hyun Kim, Joonsik Yoon, and Sara A. Vasilenko, “The Relationship Between Religiosity and Marriage from Emerging to Established Adulthood,” *Journal of Adult Development* 30, no. 1 (2023): 118–30, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-022-09416-5>.

Faith Staying were the most likely to say they left their faith due to an inconvenience or a move (fig. 24). It may be that these individuals were more likely to have moved from a location with a high density of Latter-day Saints (Utah and Idaho) to a location with a lower density, possibly making it more difficult to attend church.

In terms of adverse childhood experiences (fig. 29), Faith Leaving were the most likely to have had an adverse childhood experience at 27%, while other groups ranged between 15% and 18%.

Participants were asked questions about whether they experienced emotional, sexual, or physical abuse in a

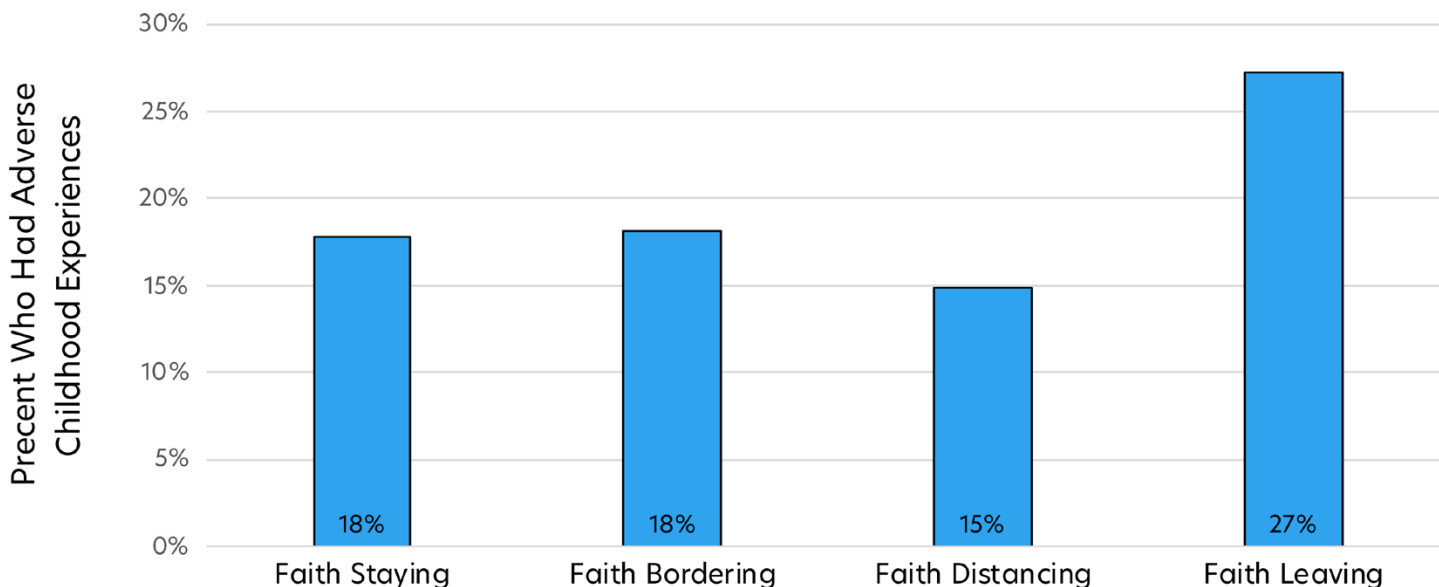


Figure 29. Percentage of Deidentified Latter-day Saints Who Had an Adverse Childhood Experience by Group

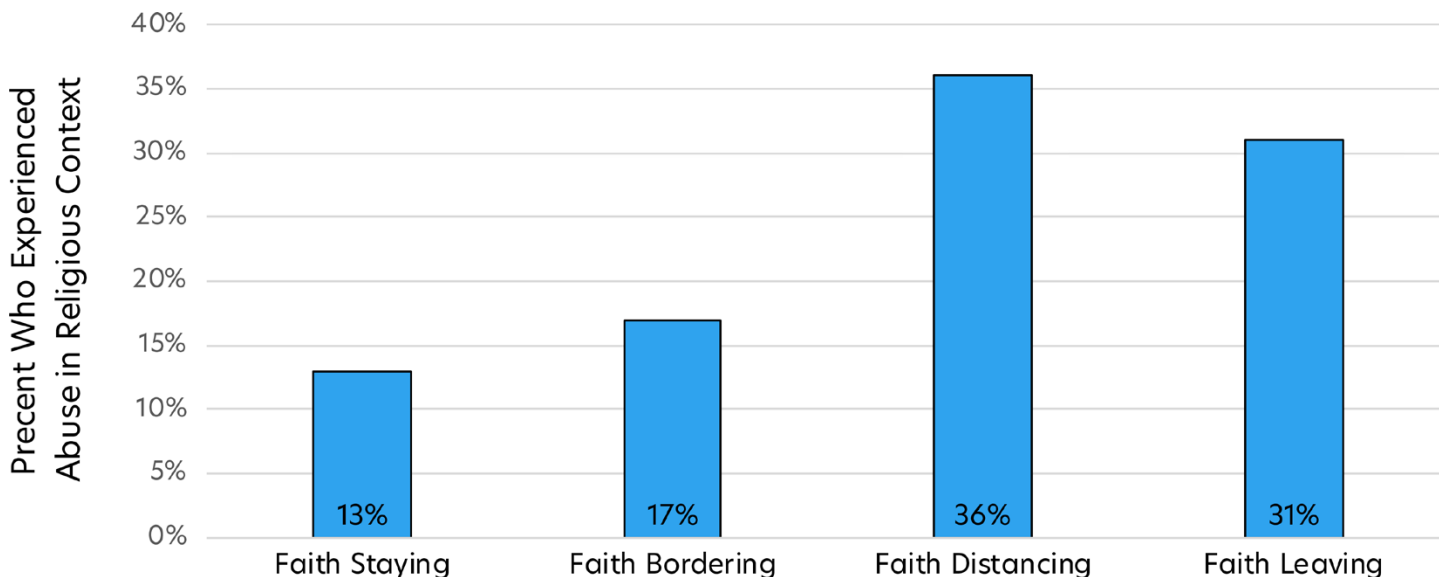


Figure 30. Percentage of Deidentified Latter-day Saints Who Experienced Abuse in a Religious Context Across Groups

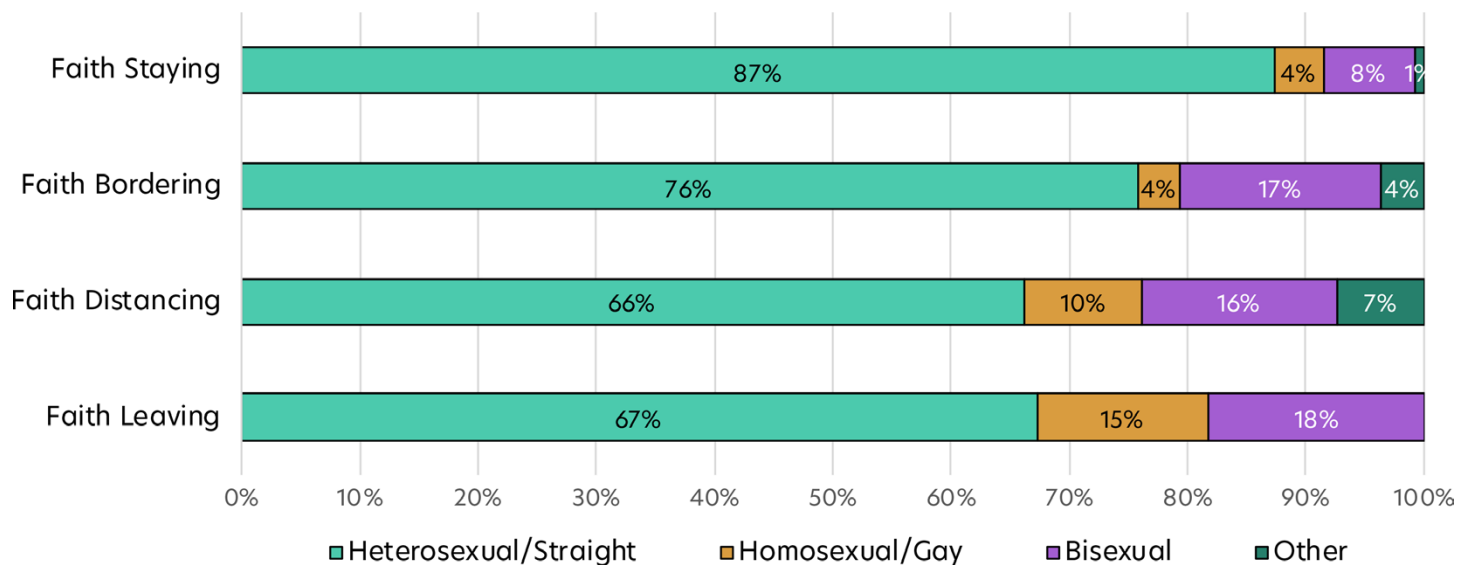


Figure 31. Sexual Orientation of Deidentified Latter-day Saints by Group

religious context (fig. 30).<sup>67</sup> Faith Staying had the lowest percentage of those who experienced some kind of abuse in a religious context at 13%, with Faith Bordering at 17%, Faith Distancing at 36%, and Faith Leaving at 31%. Other research has found that those who deidentify were more likely to have experienced abuse in a religious context than those who do not deidentify.<sup>68</sup> While this analysis is about the profiles of those who deidentified as Latter-day Saint, it would not be surprising if deidentification from any religion is strongly associated with experiencing abuse within that religion’s context.<sup>69</sup>

67. Participants were asked on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree whether they had experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse in a religious context. Percentages represent those who responded “strongly agree” to having experienced at least one of those kinds of abuse.

68. David H. Rosmarin, Steven Pirutinsky, Moses Appel, Talia Kaplan, and David Pelcovitz, “Childhood Sexual Abuse, Mental Health, and Religion Across the Jewish Community,” *Child Abuse & Neglect* 81 (July 2018): 21–28, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.04.011>; Danielle M. McGraw, Marjan Ebadi, Constance Dalenberg, Vanessa Wu, Brandi Naish, and Lisa Nunez, “Consequences of Abuse by Religious Authorities: A Review,” *Traumatology* 25, no. 4 (2019): 242–55, <https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000183>.

69. We examined whether abuse may explain the difference in retention rates between men and women, the hypothesis being that women are more likely to have experienced abuse, which may explain why they are more likely to deidentify. However, in a logistic regression exploring this, we did not find abuse to explain any of the gender

gap. We also found women were only slightly more likely to report abuse (about 2% more likely).

When included as predictor without other controls, sexual orientation was statistically significant in predicting group membership (fig. 31). However, when political ideology was also included as a predictor in the regression, sexual orientation dropped from significance. This suggests that sexual orientation itself is not predictive of group membership per se, but rather those who were nonheterosexual were more likely to be politically liberal and therefore more likely to be Faith Leaving. For example, conservative heterosexuals and conservative bisexuals were just as likely to be Faith Staying. However, compared to heterosexual individuals, bisexual individuals were more likely to be liberal than conservative and thus more likely to be in the Faith Leaving group. Figure 31 shows the percentage of each group that identified as homosexual/gay, bisexual, and “other.” For Faith Staying, 13% identified as one of these, while a full 33% of Faith Distancing and 33% of Faith Leaving identified as such. It is important to note that of those who continued to identify with the Church, 6% were nonheterosexual, and of those who deidentified from the Church, 26% were nonheterosexual.

gap. We also found women were only slightly more likely to report abuse (about 2% more likely).

## Recommitting to a Congregation

Participants were also asked, “What could possibly entice you to recommit to a congregation?”<sup>70</sup> This was asked only if an individual reported attending church “never” or “seldom.” Participants were given several reasons to choose from for potentially recommitting, and participants could select more than one reason (see table 5). Among all those who deidentified as Latter-day Saint, 36% selected the option that recommitting was “never going to happen,”

**More than half of those who leave still consider religion important—and 2 in 3 leave open the possibility of returning.**

indicating that about 2 in 3 of those who deidentified left open some possibility of recommitting. For the Faith Staying and Faith Bordering, a minority indicated that recommitting was “never going to happen” (19% and 25%, respectively). Nineteen percent of Faith Staying and 22% of Faith Bordering said they would recommit if a friend invited them or if they made new friends at church. For these two groups, other prominent reasons for recommitting were finding a church they liked and God telling them “in some significant way” to return.

By comparison, 56% of the Faith Distancing and 79% of the Faith Leaving indicated they would not recommit for any reason. Only 6% of Faith Distancing said they would recommit based on friendships, and no Faith Leaving said they would recommit based on friendships. For the Faith

Table 5. Things That Would Entice a Person Not Currently Attending Church to Recommit

	Faith Staying	Faith Bordering	Faith Distancing	Faith Leaving
New friends or friends invite	19%	22%	6%	0%
Child wants to go	13%	16%	12%	6%
Spouse wants to go	23%	23%	12%	4%
A good pastor	23%	19%	7%	0%
A good community	29%	20%	12%	0%
I find a church I like	39%	32%	17%	0%
Begin to miss church	13%	4%	1%	0%
Feel the distance from God	16%	8%	2%	2%
God tells me to go back in some significant way	58%	39%	16%	6%
I find a church who cares about justice and compassion for vulnerable people	19%	23%	13%	2%
I find a church that takes both doctrine and ethics seriously	19%	13%	6%	0%
Never going to happen	19%	25%	56%	79%

70. This question wording is somewhat ambiguous. *Recommit* may indicate to the participant they are being asked whether they would commit to the same congregation they were before. However, others may interpret this as simply committing to any congregation. Despite this ambiguity, this is a useful question to determine the degree of openness to, if nothing else, religion in general.

Distancing, the most cited reasons for recommitting were finding a church they liked and God telling them in some significant way to return. For Faith Leaving, the most cited reasons for recommitting were their children wanting to attend church and God telling them to go back in some significant way.

## Summary of Deidentification Groups

In summary, over 50% of deidentified Latter-day Saints belong to groups that, on average, still consider religion and spirituality to be of some importance. Only about 10% of deidentified individuals appear to belong to a group wholly rejecting the importance of religion and spirituality in their lives (Faith Leaving), although another 36% are in a group that places no importance on religion and very little importance on spirituality (Faith Distancing). Groups who have deidentified from the Church and still consider religion and spirituality to be important are more likely to hold conservative political views, be married, and live outside of Utah and Idaho. They are less likely to have had adverse childhood experiences or to have experienced abuse in a religious context. Faith Leaving are far more likely to report having experienced difficulties in childhood and abuse in a religious context. Finally, a substantial number of those who no longer identify as Latter-day Saints indicate there is some chance they will recommit to a congregation one day. One in five of those who still feel religion is important say they will return if a friend invites them or if they make new friends.

## Changes in the Percentage of the United States Who Identify as Latter-day Saint

PRLS data have put the percentage of the United States who are Latter-day Saint around 2%. A measure that has been used as an indicator of retention is the change over time in the percentage of the United States identifying as Latter-day Saint.<sup>71</sup> While retention is related to this

71. Jana Riess, “How the LDS Church Is Growing—and Shrinking,” Religion News Service, April 6, 2026, <https://religionnews.com/2026/04/06/how-the-lds-church-is-growing-and-shrinking/>.

percentage, it is also related to overall US growth through birth and immigration. This means a religion can actually lose its share of the US population even if it has growing numbers. Indeed, population percentages are a zero-sum game—when one group grows, some others must shrink. If a single Catholic moves to the United States, the percentage of Americans who are Latter-day Saints automatically shrinks, even if not a single Latter-day Saint left the Church.

To examine change over time in the percentage of the United States who are Latter-day Saint, we examine three surveys: the CES, the PRLS, and The Public Religion Research Institute’s Census of American Religion (PRRI).<sup>72</sup> Data from the CES finds a 45% drop in the percentage of the United States who identify as Latter-day Saint from 2014 to 2015.<sup>73</sup> However, during nearly that same time period, PRLS shows an 8% drop (between 2014 and 2024) and PRRI shows a 16% drop (between 2013 and 2025)—with neither drop being statistically significant. Given the substantial difference between CES data and the PRLS and PRRI, which survey may be more trustworthy? CES data rely on an “opt-in” panel, meaning participants selected to be part of a panel of individuals to take surveys. PRLS and PRRI, on the other hand, use random recruitment to build their samples. In other words, in contrast to the CES sample, an individual could not invite themselves to be part of the PRLS or PRRI. PRLS and PRRI also had their surveys available in Spanish, extending their reach and diversity. These surveys were also intentionally designed to capture the religiosity in the United States, whereas the CES was not specifically designed for that purpose. Extending its reach further, PRLS also allowed participants to take the survey over the phone, on paper, or online. The CES and PRRI could only be taken online. Given this, when these surveys disagree, the PRLS and PRRI are the better evidence, with PRLS likely the most reliable.

72. “2025 PRRI Census of American Religion,” April 15, 2026, Public Religion Research Institute, <https://prri.org/spotlight/2025-prri-census-of-american-religion/>.

73. Alex Bass, “Is There a LDS Religious Resurgence Happening?: New 2025 Survey Data Update of the Cooperative Election Study,” April 10, 2026, Mormon Metrics, <https://mormonmetrics.com/p/is-there-a-lds-religious-resurgence>.

## Conclusion

---

In a time of upheaval in nearly every aspect of society, it should not be surprising that religious institutions are also facing significant challenges. When people encounter increasing demands, uncertainties, anxieties, and challenges across various domains of their lives and find themselves in an age of widespread mistrust of nearly all institutions, we might expect religious disruptions as well.

At the same time, with such disruptions and confusions, it is also understandable that many would turn—or return—to the peace and purpose found within a faith community. Latter-day Saints have a distinctive set of beliefs and practices that have been of interest to religious scholars and social scientists for decades.<sup>74</sup> A good deal of published social science scholarship<sup>75</sup> has addressed Latter-day Saint beliefs and practices, including mar-

riage;<sup>76</sup> parenting;<sup>77</sup> and family-based rituals, such as family prayer and family home evening.<sup>78</sup> Many studies have been done that demonstrate the efficacy of core principles and practices in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”<sup>79</sup> Committed Latter-day Saints tend to have a set of resources available to them that can provide direction, purpose, and friendship and help them deal with a wide range of challenges. Thus, we should not be surprised by the high levels of activity among members nor by the documented well-being this encourages.<sup>80</sup>

Findings in this report suggest that of all religions surveyed in the United States, Latter-day Saints are in a strong

---

74. Nathan D. Leonhardt, Emily R. Kirchner, Thomas M. Phillips, Antonius D. Skipper, David C. Dollahite, and Loren D. Marks, “Together Forever: Eternal Perspective and Sacred Practices in American Latter-day Saint Families,” *Marriage & Family Review* 54, no. 7 (2018): 719–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2018.1469575>; David C. Dollahite and Loren D. Marks, “The Mormon American Family,” in *Ethnic Families in America: Patterns and Variations*, 5th ed., ed. Robert Wright, Charles H. Mindel, Robert W. Habenstein, and Thanh Van Tran (Prentice Hall, 2012), 461–86; David C. Dollahite, “Latter-day Saint Children and Youth in America,” in *Children and Childhood in American Religions*, ed. Don S. Browning and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Rutgers University Press, 2009), 102–18; Rachel W. Loser, Shirley R. Klein, E. Jeffrey Hill, and David C. Dollahite, “Religion and the Daily Lives of LDS Families: An Ecological Perspective,” *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* 37, no. 1 (2008): 52–70; David C. Dollahite, “Latter-day Saint Marriage and Family Life in Modern America,” in *American Religions and the Family: How Faith Traditions Cope with Modernization*, ed. Don S. Browning and David A. Clairmont (Columbia University Press, 2007), 124–50; David C. Dollahite and Loren D. Marks, “Teaching Correct Principles: Promoting Spiritual Strength in Latter-day Saint Young People,” in *Nurturing Childhood and Adolescent Spirituality: Perspectives from the World’s Religious Traditions*, ed. Karen Marie Yust, Aostre N. Johnson, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, Eugene C. Roehlkepartain (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 394–408.

75. David C. Dollahite, Loren D. Marks, and Heather Howell Kelley, “Mormon Scholars and Mormon Families in Family Studies: A Brief Retrospective,” *Mormon Studies Review* 4 (2017): 16–40, <https://doi.org/10.18809/msr.2017.0102>.

---

76. Dean M. Busby and David C. Dollahite, “The Strengths and Challenges of Contemporary Marriages of Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2020): 129–56; Michael A. Goodman, Loren D. Marks, and David C. Dollahite, “Transformational Processes and Meaning in Latter-day Saint Marriage,” *Marriage & Family Review* 48 (2012): 555–82, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2012.691081>.

77. David C. Dollahite, “Fathering for Eternity: Generative Spirituality in Latter-day Saint Fathers of Children with Special Needs,” *Review of Religious Research* 44 (2003): 237–51; Mark D. Ogletree, W. Justin Dyer, Michael A. Goodman, Courtney Kinneard, and Bradley W. McCormick, “Depression, Religiosity, and Parenting Styles Among Latter-day Saint Adolescents,” *Religions* 10, no. 3 (2019): 227, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10030227>; Michael A. Goodman and W. Justin Dyer, “From Parent to Child: Family Factors That Influence Faith Transmission,” *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 12, no. 2 (2020): 178–190, <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000283>.

78. Loren D. Marks, David C. Dollahite, Trevan G. Hatch, Matthew A. Goodman, Thomas M. Phillips, and Heather H. Kelley, “The Real Book of Mormon Musical: Latter-day Saint Family Home Evening as a Weekly Ritual,” *Marriage & Family Review* 56, no. 5 (2020): 425–48, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2020.1726852>; Rachel W. Loser, E. Jeffrey Hill, Shirley R. Klein, and David C. Dollahite, “Perceived Benefits of Religious Rituals in the Latter-day Saint Home,” *Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 3 (2009): 345–62.

79. See American Families of Faith Project, Brigham Young University, <https://americanfamiliesoffaith.byu.edu/aff-and-the-family-a-proclamation-to-the-world>.

80. William Justin Dyer, Daniel K. Judd, Megan Gale, and Hunter Gibson Finlinson, “Religion, Mental Health, and the Latter-day Saints: A Review of Literature 2005–2022,” *Religions* 14, no. 6 (2023): 6, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14060701>.

position. Latter-day Saints who stay show the highest rates of practicing their religious faith, including attending religious services, praying daily, and reading scriptures. In addition, with Latter-day Saint parents being the most likely to pray and read scriptures with their children, faith is more likely to be passed from one generation to the next.

Latter-day Saint Millennial+ members participate more in their religion than members of other religions surveyed and are among the highest in believing in God and considering religion to be important in their lives. They are also the most likely to feel a sense of spiritual peace and well-being. Of all the surveyed Christian groups, Latter-day Saints are one of the least likely to lose Millennial+ members. The Church also has a low rate of Millennial+ members being only nominally engaged in their faith. Thus, the Church is retaining its Millennial+ members at a higher rate than most other (particularly Christian) religions. And this retention is not simply in name only. Latter-day Saints have one of the highest rates of active retention, where those raised in the faith attend church frequently as adults. This coupled with the high birth rate of Latter-day Saints indicates that the Church appears to have, as Ryan Burge notes, “a bright future ahead of it.”<sup>81</sup>

In examining those raised Latter-day Saint but no longer identifying as such in adulthood, several important findings emerged. Perhaps the most important finding is that deidentified individuals are not a monolithic group. We found four groups of deidentified individuals, with two groups (comprising about 54% of the sample) who still find value in religion and spirituality and hold somewhat favorable views about Latter-day Saints. Many of these individuals will likely return if they have a friend at church. These groups are more likely to be politically conservative and married. Only 10% of deidentified individuals belong to a group that entirely rejects religion and spirituality (Faith Leaving). These individuals are more likely to have had adverse childhood experiences

and some kind of abuse in a religious context (though certainly not all the members of this group experienced these things).

Further, political ideology appears to distinguish between the four groups of deidentifiers and, for youth, predict future deidentification. It has been argued that an individual’s political leanings may drive his or her decisions more than his or her religion.<sup>82</sup> As one researcher summarizes, “scholars have repeatedly shown that politics can . . . be in the driver’s seat when it comes to church attendance, adopting (or eschewing) religious labels, beliefs about the world around them, prayer, and membership in religious communities.”<sup>83</sup> Our analyses of the FFYD data found that youth who feel The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not align with their politics are significantly more likely to leave the Church a few years later.

It is important to note that this report deals with general statistical associations and trends. Of course, there are always exceptions and counterexamples: There are many nonreligious and non-Latter-day Saint families with exceptional marriages and parent-child relationships just as there are highly religious Latter-day Saint families with unhappy or unsuccessful marriages and parent-child relationships. Further, this report does not provide a full explanation of the current religiousness of Latter-day Saints nor a full explanation as to why some may choose to deidentify. Much work is yet to be done in this area, and this report reflects only an initial effort.

The intent of this report is to provide some understanding of current US trends in Latter-day Saint religiousness and what may be (in part) influencing those trends. Our analyses suggest the robust position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in fostering religiousness among members while also acknowledging the challenges associated with the current cultural shift in religiousness.

---

81. Ryan P. Burge, *The American Religious Landscape: Facts, Trends, and the Future* (Oxford University Press, 2025), 151.

---

82. Margolis, *From Politics to the Pews*, 3.

83. Michele F. Margolis, “Reversing the Causal Arrow: Politics’ Influence on Religious Choices,” *Advances in Political Psychology* 43, no. S1 (2022): 284, <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12829>.

# Appendix A

## Latter-day Saint Spiritual Seismology and Family Foundations of Youth Development Methods Survey Descriptions

---

### Latter-day Saint Spiritual Seismology Survey

---

Data for the Spiritual Seismology Survey (SSS) were collected using an online survey administered through Qualtrics (Ryan Burge, professor at Washington University, is a principal investigator of this project). The instrument was designed by a research team to assess a broad range of topics related to religious affiliation, belief, practice, spirituality, and moral and political attitudes.

The survey was fielded between February 28, 2025, and July 16, 2025. Respondents were recruited via Qualtrics Panels, which use an opt-in, quota-based sampling framework. Qualtrics maintains partnerships with multiple online panel providers to ensure diverse recruitment and robust sample quality. Participants were invited by email to complete the survey and were provided a modest incentive (typically, points redeemable for cash or gift cards) through their respective panel vendors.

To achieve national representativeness, Qualtrics implemented quotas based on age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education level calibrated to match benchmarks from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).

The final dataset included 100,741 adult respondents aged 18 and older residing in the United States. Median completion time was approximately 20 minutes. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and no personally identifying information was retained beyond standard Qualtrics metadata necessary for survey administration.

Attention checks and response-quality screens (for example, speeding, straight-lining, and inconsistent responses) were included to ensure data integrity. Respondents who

failed multiple quality checks were excluded from the final analytic sample.

For the current report, we had access to only the Latter-day Saint sample. The total sample size was 1,668, with 53% current Latter-day Saints and 47% former Latter-day Saints.

### Family Foundations of Youth Development Methodology

---

Full details of the Family Foundations of Youth Development (FFYD) dataset can be found at [foundations.byu.edu](https://foundations.byu.edu). The FFYD project currently includes five waves of data collection (2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024). At each wave, previous participants were invited to participate again, and surveys took about 35–55 minutes to complete. Because Latter-day Saints are underrepresented in research literature, they were intentionally oversampled.

Wave 1 (2016) focused on Utah youth and one of their parents. To obtain a random sample, the study used the national research company InfoUSA (now Data Axle), which compiles household information from publicly available sources. From that database, 10,000 Utah households with a child age 12–14 were randomly selected. Recruitment letters with unique survey codes were mailed, and households were also contacted by phone. Although the database was generally reliable, household composition was inaccurate in at least 10% of cases. Among eligible households, just over 60% participated. To preserve a random sample, families and friends could not join unless their household had been randomly selected, though multiple eligible youth within a selected household could participate. In Wave 1, there were 597 child participants and 618 parent participants.

Wave 2 (2018) recontacted Wave 1 participants and added new participants from Utah and Arizona. Arizona was chosen because it is similar to Utah in some respects but has a substantially lower proportion of Latter-day Saints than Utah. New families were again recruited through InfoUSA, this time selecting households with a child age 12–16 so they would be comparable in age to returning participants. More than 80% of Wave 1 participants returned. Wave 2 included 1,264 child participants and 1,395 parent participants.

Wave 3 (2020) recontacted participants from the earlier waves and added a Southern California sample. Most California participants were recruited through InfoUSA using the same mailing and phone procedures. Because that did not yield enough Latter-day Saint participants, the BYU Alumni database was also used; 1,000 recruitment emails

were sent, and analyses included a control for whether California participants came from InfoUSA or the BYU Alumni database. Wave 3 included 1,699 child participants and 1,777 parent participants.

Wave 4 (2022) continued the longitudinal study with 1,242 child participants and 1,346 parent participants. Retention from Wave 3 to Wave 4 was 71% for children and 74% for parents.

Wave 5 (2024) included 1,139 child participants and 1,201 parent participants. Retention from Wave 4 to Wave 5 was 72% for children and 73% for parents.

Across all five waves, the project combined random-sample recruitment with longitudinal follow-up, allowing both cross-sectional and developmental analyses of youth and parents over time.

# **Appendix B**

## **Religiousness and Well-Being**

### **Across Families of Religions and Denominations**

---

**Table B1. Religiousness and Well-Being Across Families of Religions (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024)**

	Monthly Service Attendance		Daily Prayer		Weekly Scripture Reading		Pray with Children		Religion Very Important		Absolutely Believe in God		Deep Sense of Spiritual Peace Once a Week	
	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Parents	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	
Baptist family	55%	46%	75%	59%	48%	37%	62%	69%	60%	86%	79%	63%	47%	
Methodist family	43%	40%	55%	39%	25%	15%	49%	49%	34%	70%	54%	44%	33%	
Nondenominational family	61%	60%	77%	64%	55%	46%	72%	68%	63%	88%	81%	64%	56%	
Lutheran family	47%	40%	51%	36%	22%	13%	57%	50%	35%	68%	62%	40%	26%	
Presbyterian family	48%	57%	53%	54%	32%	31%	65%	48%	47%	63%	60%	47%	26%	
Pentecostal family	64%	54%	85%	63%	63%	45%	71%	79%	68%	94%	83%	68%	57%	
Episcopal family	38%	45%	49%	42%	16%	16%	39%	40%	31%	60%	45%	42%	36%	
Restorationist family	60%	57%	71%	51%	52%	37%	76%	68%	70%	85%	78%	62%	54%	
Congregationalist family	42%	45%	43%	39%	20%	22%	46%	35%	50%	57%	62%	45%	25%	
Holiness family	71%	62%	82%	72%	70%	52%	90%	87%	61%	95%	67%	79%	63%	
Protestant nonspecific family	32%	29%	60%	49%	33%	24%	55%	48%	43%	74%	67%	47%	45%	
Catholic	43%	34%	56%	41%	16%	12%	45%	47%	37%	67%	55%	42%	33%	
Latter-day Saint	76%	76%	78%	70%	63%	56%	80%	77%	69%	80%	73%	67%	62%	
Orthodox Christian	40%	33%	60%	46%	19%	11%	60%	52%	35%	64%	45%	38%	32%	
Jewish	17%	31%	20%	25%	12%	18%	39%	21%	35%	30%	31%	29%	28%	
Muslim	43%	48%	70%	65%	28%	28%	70%	57%	60%	70%	72%	46%	42%	
Buddhist	18%	15%	32%	11%	17%	9%	16%	24%	19%	31%	19%	36%	30%	
Hindu	37%	34%	51%	44%	9%	14%	46%	23%	23%	37%	36%	26%	34%	
Spiritual but not religious	4%	6%	53%	33%	17%	4%	29%	24%	11%	79%	64%	62%	42%	
Atheist/Agnostic	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%	4%	3%	19%	14%	
Nothing in particular	4%	5%	21%	15%	4%	4%	17%	7%	6%	30%	24%	26%	23%	

Table B2. Religiousness and Well-Being Across Denominations (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024)

	Monthly Service Attendance		Daily Prayer		Weekly Scripture Reading		Pray with Children		Religion Very Important		Absolutely Believe in God		Deep Sense of Spiritual Peace Once a Week	
	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Parents	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	Silent-Gen X	Mill+	
Latter-day Saint	76%	76%	78%	70%	63%	56%	80%	77%	69%	80%	73%	67%	62%	
Southern Baptist Convention	61%	58%	76%	70%	52%	48%	66%	71%	63%	88%	82%	65%	61%	
American Baptist Churches (USA)	46%	36%	71%	34%	38%	18%	51%	67%	43%	85%	69%	55%	35%	
National Baptist Convention (USA)	60%	32%	82%	67%	59%	39%	71%	80%	64%	88%	79%	71%	50%	
United Methodist Church	39%	37%	51%	35%	21%	13%	45%	43%	29%	67%	52%	41%	28%	
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	52%	55%	56%	43%	28%	21%	72%	55%	47%	72%	76%	44%	36%	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)	45%	26%	47%	26%	18%	6%	45%	49%	21%	69%	57%	39%	21%	
Presbyterian Church in America	60%	70%	67%	69%	51%	42%	82%	61%	67%	72%	87%	58%	25%	
Presbyterian Church (USA)	44%	56%	45%	53%	23%	26%	44%	41%	35%	60%	50%	42%	32%	
Assemblies of God	62%	63%	85%	71%	65%	52%	72%	76%	76%	95%	87%	71%	61%	
Episcopal Church	38%	36%	50%	35%	15%	10%	34%	40%	24%	60%	35%	44%	37%	
Churches of Christ	60%	53%	75%	50%	54%	35%	76%	70%	75%	87%	76%	61%	52%	
Catholic	43%	34%	56%	41%	16%	12%	45%	47%	37%	67%	55%	42%	33%	

# Appendix C Retention and Gender

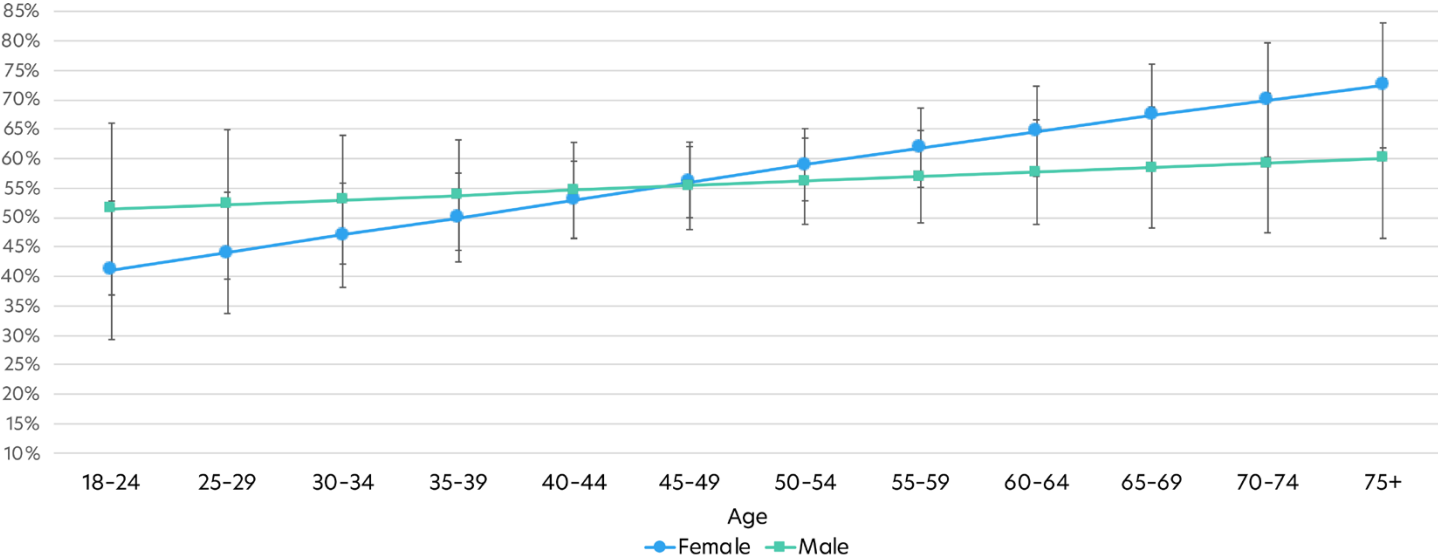
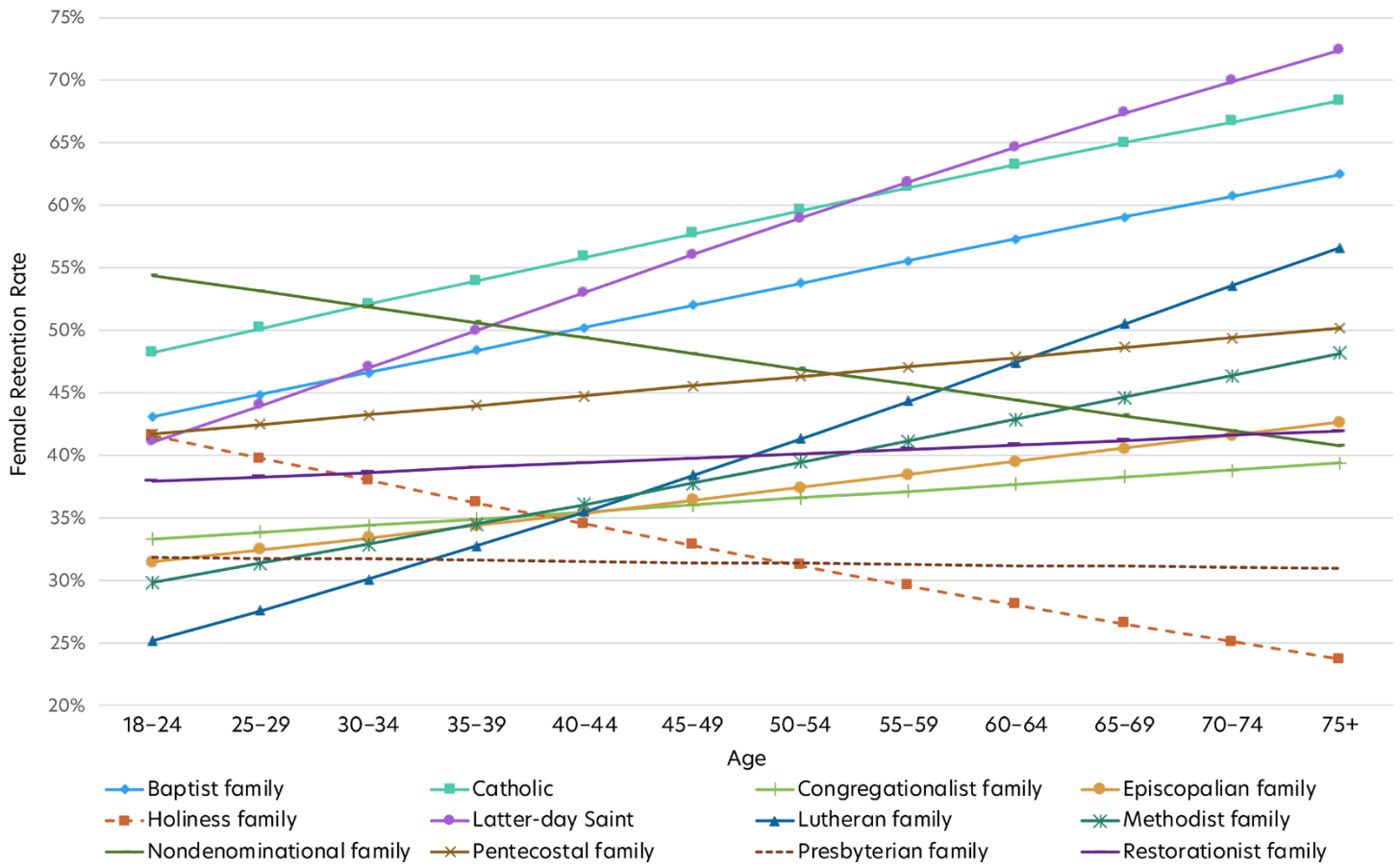


Figure C1. Latter-day Saint Retention Rate in 2024 by Gender and Age (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=717)



**Figure C2.** Female Retention Rates in 2024 Across Religions and Age (Pew Religious Landscape Study, 2024; n=15,898)

*Note:* Only religious families with a sample of over 200 women were used.

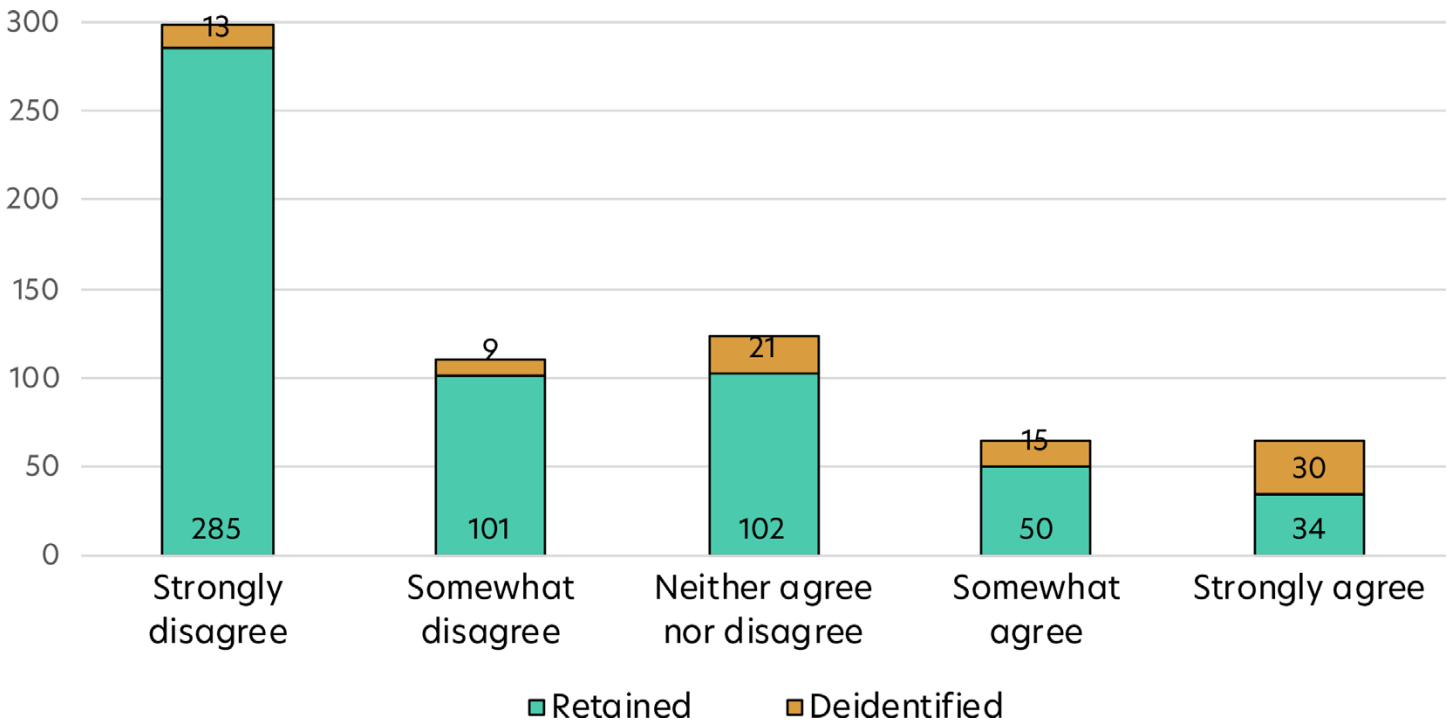
## Appendix D Same-Sex Marriage and Deidentification

One of the reviewers of this report raised an important point that deserves attention. The point was that if The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints changed to fully accept same-sex marriage, many of those who agree with this change would be retained. At the same time, it is important to recognize that a change in same-sex marriage teachings could potentially increase the likelihood of deidentifying for those who disagree with the change.

We use figure D1 to illustrate this. In the FFYD, 65 participants somewhat agreed that the Church should accept same-sex marriage, 15 of whom were deidentified. Another 64 strongly agreed the Church should accept same-sex marriage, 30 of whom were deidentified. By contrast, 110 somewhat disagreed and 298 strongly disagreed that the Church should accept same-sex marriage.

Among all participants who disagreed, only 22 were deidentified.

Under a hypothetical scenario in which same-sex marriage was fully accepted and, due to this change, 100% of those who agreed (somewhat or strongly) with such acceptance were retained, 45 individuals in the sample would be retained. However, if only 15% of those who disagreed with the Church accepting same-sex marriage (somewhat or strongly) deidentified in response to the change, the Church would lose 58 individuals—more than the number retained. Moreover, the assumption of 100% retention among those favoring same-sex marriage is unrealistically high, while a 15% loss among those disagreeing is likely conservative. Numerically, if retention alone were the goal, such a change would likely not meet that goal.



**Figure D1.** Raw Retention by Agreement That Their Religion Should Fully Accept Same-Sex Marriage (Family Foundations of Youth Development Study)

## Appendix E Latent Profile Methods

Latent profile analysis was used to create groupings of those who deidentified from the Church. Analyses were conducted in LatentGold 6.1 with full information maximum likelihood used to handle missing data. There was substantial improvement in model fit from 1–4 classes and then smaller improvements thereafter (table 1a). The bootstrap difference test for k-1 classes was significant in every instance. Entropy was excellent throughout, ranging

from .96 to .99, and therefore did not meaningfully distinguish classes. Substantively different classes emerged from within each additional class up to the fourth class. Adding a fifth and sixth class appeared to only add classes that were slight variants on already identified classes. We therefore determined the four-class solution to be the simplest without losing meaningful information.

**Table E1. Latent Profile Fit Indices (n=527, Spiritual Seismology Survey)**

Classes	Log-Likelihood	Number of Parameters	BIC	SABIC	AIC	Entropy	k-1 Bootstrap Difference Test
1	-9318.98	29	18819.70	18727.65	18695.95	—	—
2	-8258.12	53	16848.39	16680.16	16622.23	0.9586	p < .001
3	-7549.12	77	15580.80	15336.39	15252.23	0.9791	p < .001
4	-7254.03	101	15141.05	14820.45	14710.06	0.9843	p < .001
5	-7059.99	125	14903.38	14506.59	14369.98	0.9855	p < .001
6	-6833.71	149	14601.23	14128.26	13965.41	0.9934	p < .001