



# GLOBAL YOUTH CULTURE

*Insights from a Digital Generation*

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# INTRODUCTION

Right now, teenagers make up 11% of the global population<sup>1</sup>. For every 10 humans on the planet, there is 1 teenager making the transition from childhood to adulthood. This 1-in-10 teenager is navigating puberty, encountering social awkwardness, experimenting, and making mistakes, all while starting to envision their future self.

We know the teenage years are tough, and one of the things we wondered about was their faith journey during these years. So we sent out an online survey to 13-19 year olds around the world.

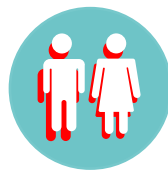
<sup>1</sup> United Nations Population Division, Total Population Database, <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/> Accessed August 2020.



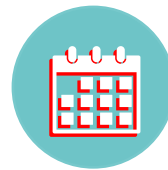
20 Countries



14 Languages



8,394 Digitally  
Connected Teens



Ages  
13-19



70 Item  
Survey



**Africa:** Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa (1,275 teens surveyed)

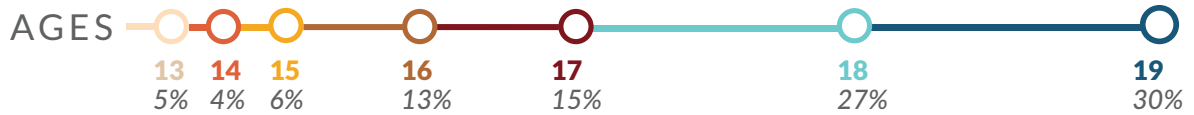
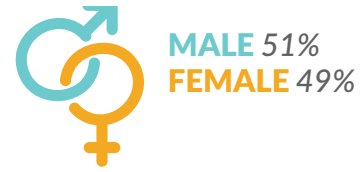
**Asia:** China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam (2,100 teens surveyed)

**Eurasia:** Egypt, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, The United Kingdom (2,936 teens surveyed)

**Latin America:** Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico (1,673 teens surveyed)

**North America:** United States (410 teens surveyed)

# ABOUT THE TEENS

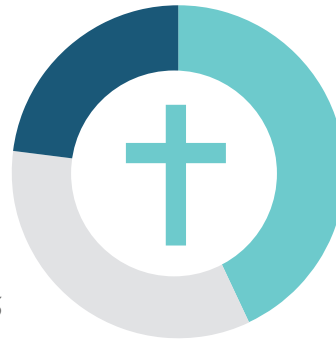


## OTHER RELIGION 23%

- Muslim 12%
- Buddhist 5%
- Hindu 4%

## NO RELIGION 34%

- Atheist 15%
- None 13%
- Agnostic 5%



Their answers were complex, pretty much like they are right now. Reading their responses took us on a roller coaster ride of emotions. At first we were surprised at how few of them have ever opened a Bible or attended a religious service, then pleased that so many had positive family experiences, totally heartbroken when we learned that mental health struggles are higher globally than we ever imagined, confused by their identity confusion, surprised again by who they turn to for advice, and ended up finding some glimmers of hope in the impact a personal experience or invitation can have on their beliefs.

Hang in there...this report is a wild ride! It's revealing and immensely helpful if you can see it through to the end. The same goes for raising teens. It might seem complicated, hard, and hopeless at times, but if you know what they're thinking, you can help guide them safely through the most challenging, yet formative years of their lives.

# RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

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# What We Discovered

## TEENS GLOBALLY...



**Over half** (52%) of teens globally say they **never read religious scripture on their own.**



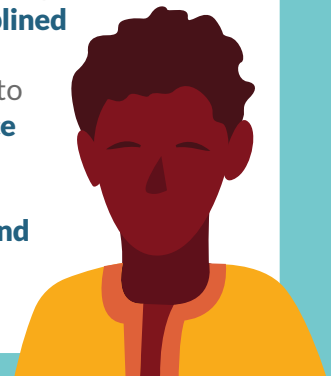
Teens who don't go to church report they are **open to attending if invited** and say the Christians they know are **kind and caring.**



Over half (52%) of teens believe **all religions teach equally valid truths.** Christians are **just as likely** as non-believers to say this.

Don't miss this.

Muslim young people are the **most disciplined** of any religion when it comes to religious **service attendance, scripture engagement, and prayer.**



**Two in three** teens globally say their faith beliefs or spiritual journey are **an important part of their identity.**

## CHRISTIAN TEENS...

**43%** of teens surveyed self-identified as **Christian.**



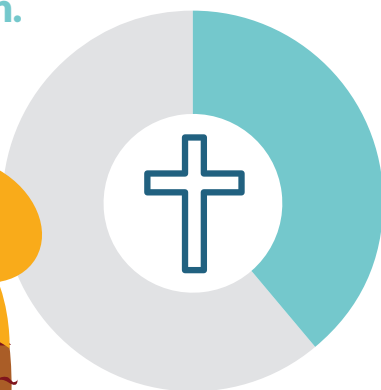
Only **7%** display the beliefs and habits of a **Committed Christian.** (See definition on page 6)



**40%** of self-identified Christian teens say they **never read the Bible.**



Teens who hold to the core beliefs of Christianity, regularly engage with the Bible, and have a habit of prayer report **significantly lower rates of personal struggles.**



# The Truth Is ...

It was hard to get a clear picture of the religious beliefs of global teens today probably because they are unwilling to say that truth can be found in only one religion.

Over half (52%) of teens globally believe all religions teach equally valid truths. Christian teens are just as likely as non-believers to hold this position. Teens with other faith identifications such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism are much more likely—not less likely—to take this position (67%).

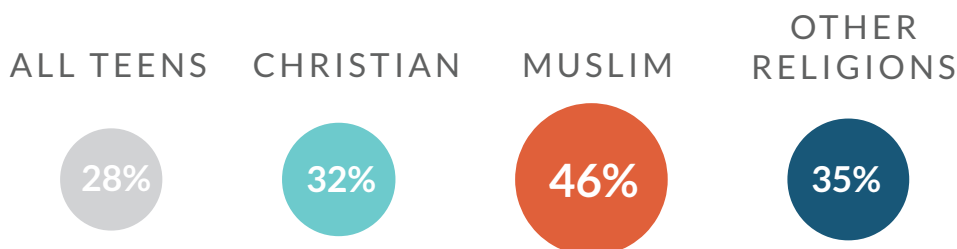
Is this confusing? Yes, but remember, they're teenagers trying to figure things out. While they say that a spiritual journey is an important part of their identity, they also refuse to have an exclusive view of where spiritual truth can be found.

Even more confusing than their lack of commitment to truth is that they don't appear to be searching for it, much less sharing it. Nearly half (46%) of teens won't discuss faith issues with others who do not share their beliefs.

Even Christian teens appear to be influenced by this thinking. A significant minority (30%) disagree with the statement that forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ.

## SHARING FAITH

*How often teens are talking about religious or spiritual things with people who do not share their beliefs (monthly or more often)*



The reality is that **44% of Christian teens disagree that they even have a responsibility to share their faith with others.**

## GLOBAL RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

**OTHER RELIGION 23%**

Muslim 12% • Buddhist 5% • Hindu 4%

**NO RELIGION 34%**

Atheist 15% • None 13% • Agnostic 5%

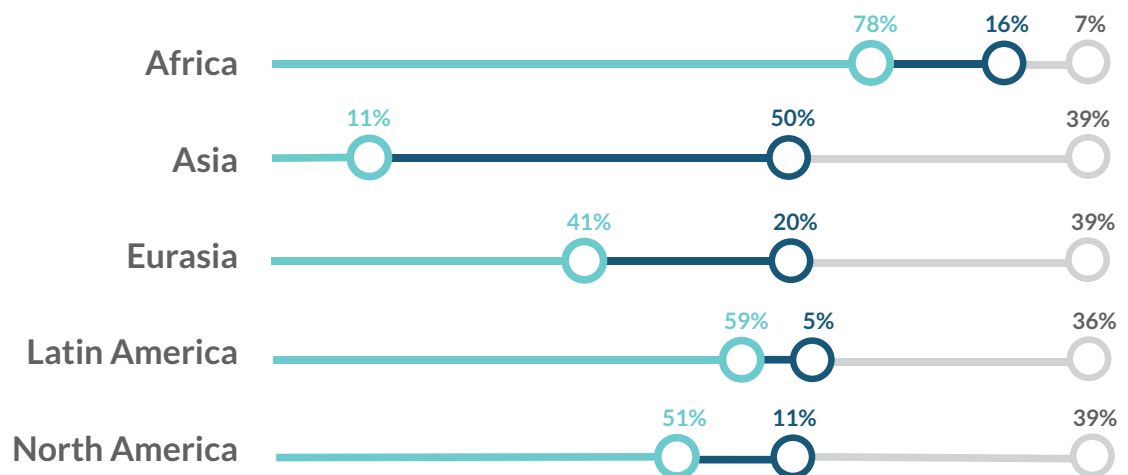


**CHRISTIAN 43%**

Globally, around **2 in 5 teens identified themselves as Christian**, 1 in 4 as another religion, while 1 in 3 were of no religious affiliation. Of all the regions we studied, Africa had the most Christians, while Asia had the least.

## RELIGION BY REGION

CHRISTIAN OTHER RELIGIONS NO RELIGION





# The Committed Few

Christian teens who are serious about their walk with Jesus can look vastly different depending on the person, their surroundings, and their cultural context. OneHope created a definition of the beliefs and behaviors that would indicate a respondent is a Committed Christian.

## 6 TRAITS OF COMMITTED CHRISTIAN TEENS

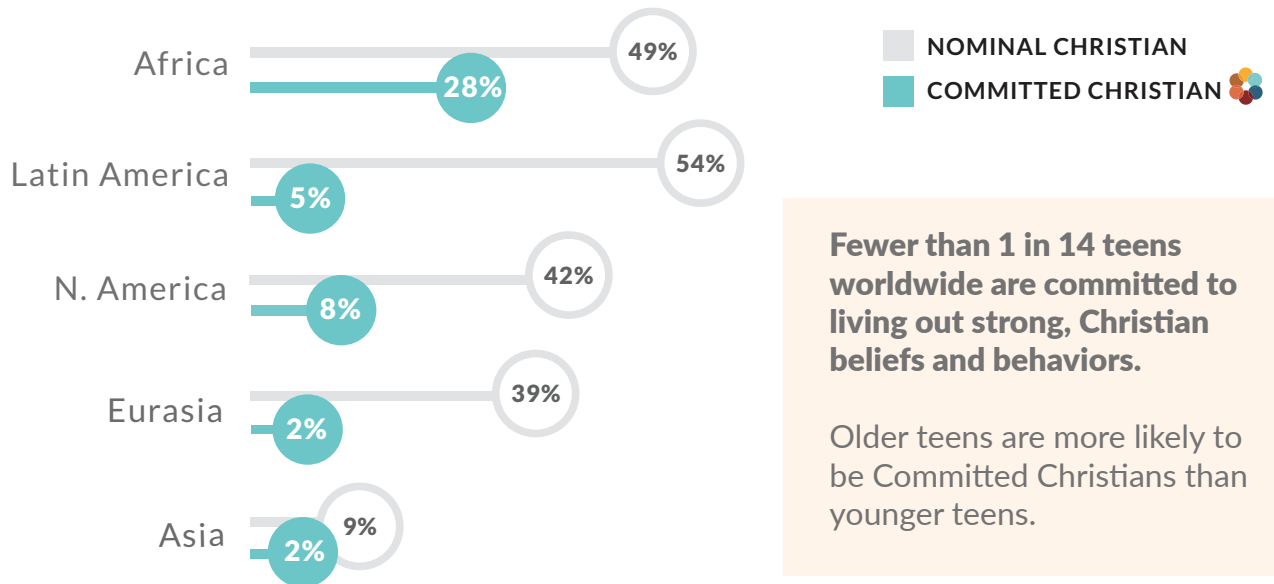


*\* Note that these teens self-identified as Christian, but not as Jehovah's Witness or Mormon. Committed Christians may be Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Orthodox, or a number of other denominations.*

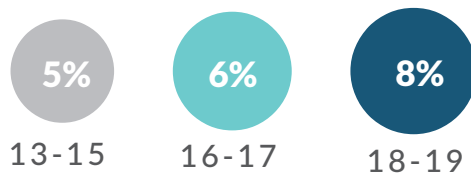
Globally, there are very few Committed Christian teens. Although 43% claimed Christianity as their religion, only 7% display the beliefs and behaviors that indicate they are committed to their Christian walks.

**Nominal Christians** are teens who identify themselves as Christian but do not display one or more of the core beliefs or habits of a Committed Christian defined above.

## COMMITTED CHRISTIAN BY REGION



## COMMITTED CHRISTIAN BY AGE



## The Benefits of Being Committed

The positive benefits of being a Committed Christian are undeniable. Just a few examples include:

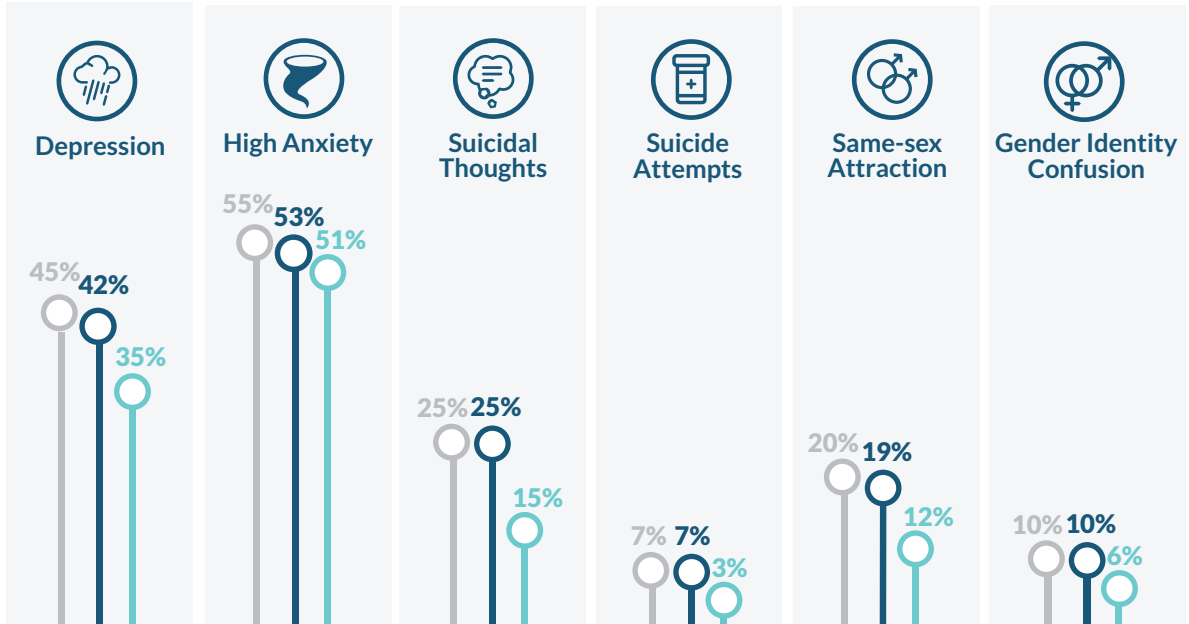
- Committed Christians are much less likely than other teens to say they have been depressed recently (35% vs 46%).
- They are less than half as likely to report a recent suicide attempt (3% vs 7%).
- They are less likely to report they are confused about their gender identity (6% to 11%).
- They are around half as likely to say they are same-sex attracted compared to the global average of other teens (12% vs 21%).

Committed Christians reported lower rates of at-risk behaviors and concerning mental health issues on nearly every item we measured.

# PERSONAL STRUGGLES

In the past three months I have experienced:

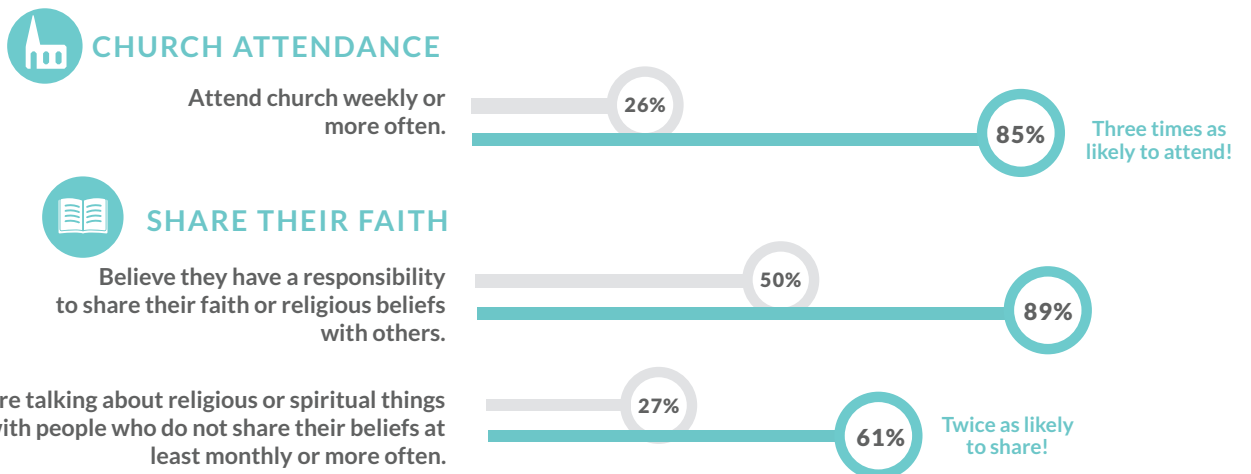
ALL TEENS    NOMINAL CHRISTIANS    COMMITTED CHRISTIANS



# RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR

Committed Christians also display markedly different religious behaviors than Nominal Christian Teens, as you can see here:

NOMINAL CHRISTIAN    COMMITTED CHRISTIAN



# Religious Habits

## SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT



52% of teens never read religious Scripture on their own.

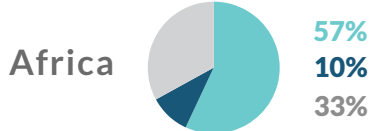
Over half (52%) of teens globally say they never read religious Scripture on their own.

40% of self-identified Christian teens say they never read the Bible.

Muslims are over 3 times as likely to be engaging with the Quran daily (36%) than Christian teens are to be reading their Bibles (11%).

## CHURCH ATTENDANCE

- Weekly or more often
- Monthly
- Several times a year or less often



### LEAST ENGAGED WITH SCRIPTURE



% who say they never read it

Teens are much more likely to say they have a habit of prayer than other religious habits.

Regardless of religion, 42% of teens say they pray weekly or daily. See a full breakdown on the following page.

Muslims are much more disciplined with 72% reporting that they pray daily as compared with 41% of Christian teens and 33% of teens of other religions.

Living a spiritually-integrated life is vastly different than performing religious habits. Where you are going to worship and the content you are engaging in Scripture matters a lot and has a visible impact on teens' lived experiences and personal struggles.

# GLOBAL TEENS' RELIGIOUS HABITS

We measured teens' religious habits such as gathering with their faith community, reading Scripture, and praying. Of all religions in our study, Muslim young people demonstrated the most discipline in their spiritual practices.

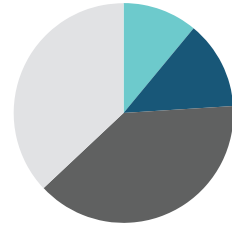
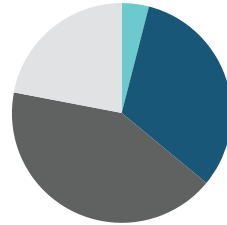
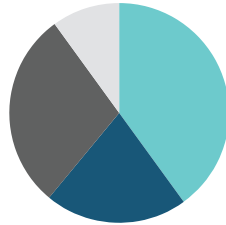


ATTENDING  
RELIGIOUS  
SERVICES

MUSLIM

CHRISTIAN

OTHER RELIGIONS



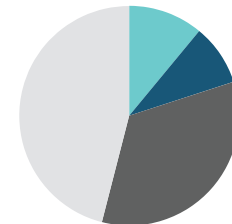
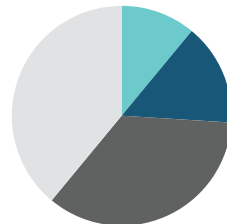
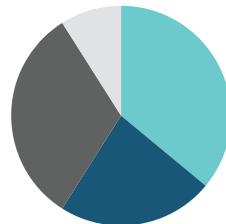
10% 29% 21% 40%

22% 42% 32% 4%

38% 39% 13% 11%



READING  
RELIGIOUS  
SCRIPTURE ON  
THEIR OWN



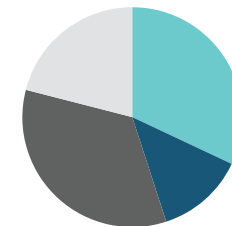
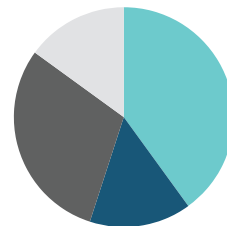
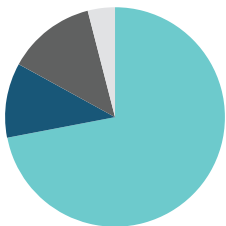
9% 32% 23% 36%

40% 35% 15% 11%

46% 34% 9% 11%



PRAYING



4% 13% 11% 72%

15% 30% 15% 41%

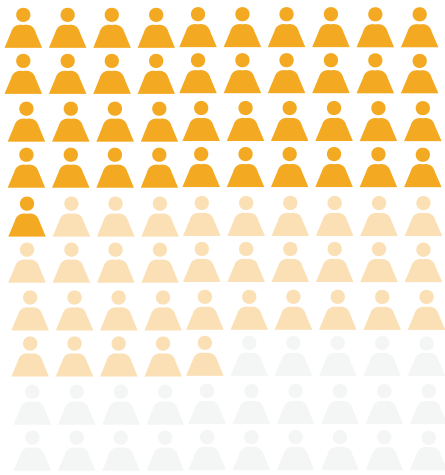
21% 34% 13% 33%

DAILY  
WEEKLY

MONTHLY OR SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR  
NEVER



# Spirituality as an Identity



**41%** of teens who do not already attend church say they would come if invited.

**34%** say they are not sure.

**Surprisingly, teens across the globe are seeking spirituality, regardless of their religious affiliation.**

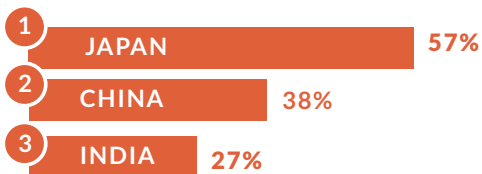
2 in 3 teens globally say their faith beliefs or spiritual journey are an important part of their identity. Notably, nearly half (44%) of teens of no religion still say this.

41% of teens who do not already attend church say they would come if invited. Only 1 in 4 say they would not come.

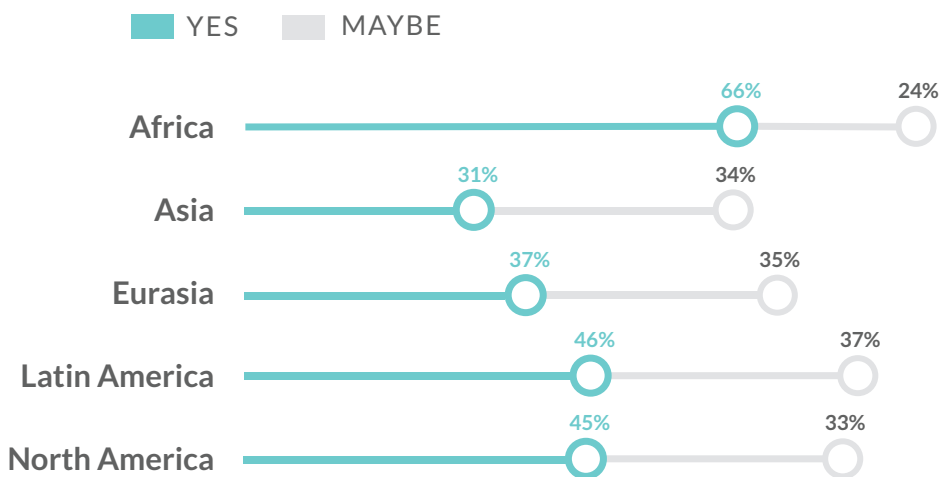
**More great news: teens have a positive view of the believers in their lives.**

71% of non-Christian teens said most Christians they know are kind and caring. However, in some Asian countries, a significant number of teens said they don't know any Christians at all.

## I DON'T KNOW ANY CHRISTIANS



## WOULD TEENS ATTEND CHURCH



# Conclusion

Remember, this is just a snapshot. The good news is that the attitudes and habits of the young people depicted here are far from fixed. This research gives us valuable insight and points us towards some practical implications and applications on how to help guide them as they age.

- **IT DOESN'T HURT TO ASK!**

Teenagers, on the whole, are spiritually open, and non-believers may be more willing to visit church than you think. They already have a positive perception of Christians as kind and caring. Show them that you care about their eternal destiny, and don't be afraid to share the spiritual journey that is an important part of your own identity.

- **SIMPLY BELIEVING THE RIGHT THINGS IS NOT ENOUGH.**

Teens who hold to the core beliefs of Christianity and pair those with a habit of Scripture engagement and prayer see big differences in their lives. It is critically important to help teens move from being Nominal Christians to Committed Christians by modeling for them and encouraging them to engage with God through His Word and through prayer. Focus on discipling teens in these two areas, and you may find that other things in their life start to fall into place.

- **FOLLOWING CHRIST IS BOTH AN IDENTITY AND A DISCIPLINE**

While teens may be quick to agree that faith is important, not every faith has the power to save. Christian teens need to be willing to stand up for the exclusive truth that forgiveness of sins is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the heart of the Gospel that every young person needs to hear and come to believe for themselves.



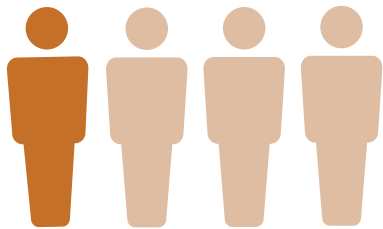
PERSONAL  
EXPERIENCES  
AND STRUGGLES

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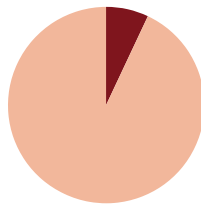


# What We Discovered

A significant number of teens are struggling with their mental health, reporting high anxiety, loneliness, depression, and suicidal ideation and attempts.



**1 in 4**  
teens globally report having had suicidal thoughts within the last three months

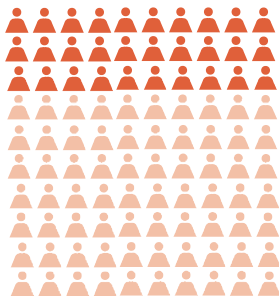


**1 in 14** say they actually attempted to take their own life.

Girls are harder hit than boys when it comes to their mental health and are almost twice as likely to say they made a suicide attempt.



## TEENS GLOBALLY



**3 in 10** teens globally report having been sexually active in the past three months.

## CHRISTIANS



The rate is even higher among Christians (1 in 3).

*Note: This reflects unmarried teens*



**1 in 5**  
teens report feeling sexually attracted to someone of the same gender within the past three months.

# A Glimpse into a Teenager's Reality

Teens in this study were up front in telling us that they are dealing with some serious personal struggles, sharing about the complex realities of being a young person in today's world. While it may be uncomfortable, we can only understand and help them when we are willing to see what life looks like through their eyes.

## A CONCERNING LOOK AT MENTAL HEALTH

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, teens reported alarming rates of struggle with loneliness, anxiety, depression, suicide, sexual activity, same-sex attraction – particularly among girls.

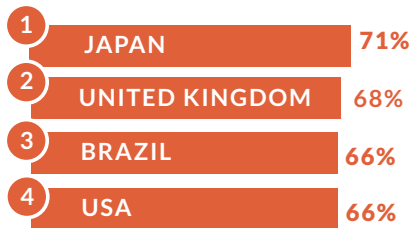
This data is a window into teens' mental health at a broad yet deeply personal level—reflecting life as they see and feel it.

*Please Note: These are not necessarily clinical levels of depression or anxiety. Teens interpreted for themselves the terms provided and self-reported if they felt they had experienced them.*

### TOP COUNTRIES BY STRUGGLE



#### HIGH ANXIETY



#### DEPRESSION

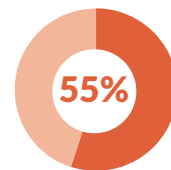


#### LONELINESS

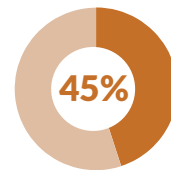


### MENTAL HEALTH GLOBALLY

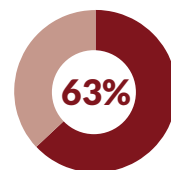
#### HIGH ANXIETY



#### DEPRESSION



#### LONELINESS



**1 in 4 teens globally reported suicidal thoughts with 4 countries reporting rates of 1 in 3 or greater.**

7% of teens (1 in 14) globally reported a suicide attempt within the past three months with 4 countries reporting rates greater than 1 in 10.

In our study, suicide attempts were observed to trend with age, being highest among younger teens and lowest among older teens.

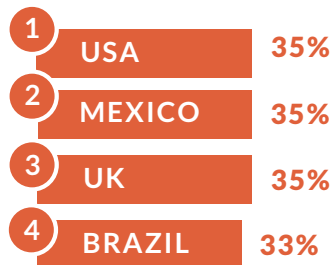
*Please Note: It is important to remember that this data is self-reported by teens, not drawn from hospital records or country incident reporting which in many cases forms the basis of other research studies on this topic.*

1 IN 4  
TEENS  
GLOBALLY  
REPORTED  
SUICIDAL  
THOUGHTS.

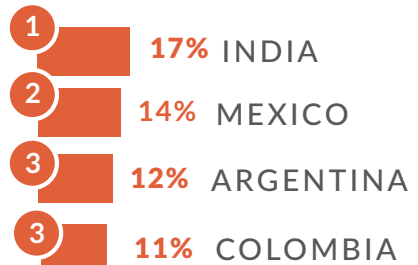
## TOP COUNTRIES BY STRUGGLE



### SUICIDAL THOUGHTS



### SUICIDE ATTEMPTS



## SUICIDE ATTEMPTS BY AGE



13-15



16-17

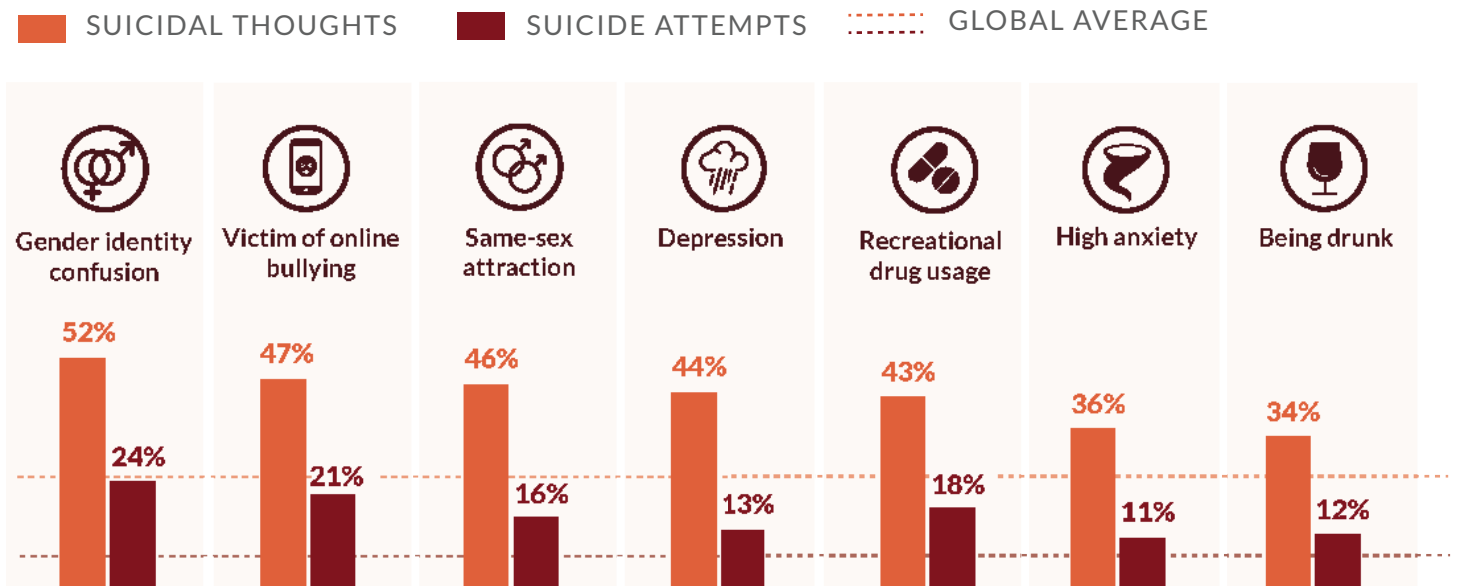


18-19

# Dark Places

Teens in dark places may consider taking desperate actions. Our research clearly revealed that teens who are struggling with depression, anxiety, drug or alcohol addiction, online bullying, or issues like gender identity or same-sex attraction are at much higher risk of suicidal ideation and attempts.

## 7 FACTORS THAT CORRELATE WITH HIGHER SUICIDE RISK

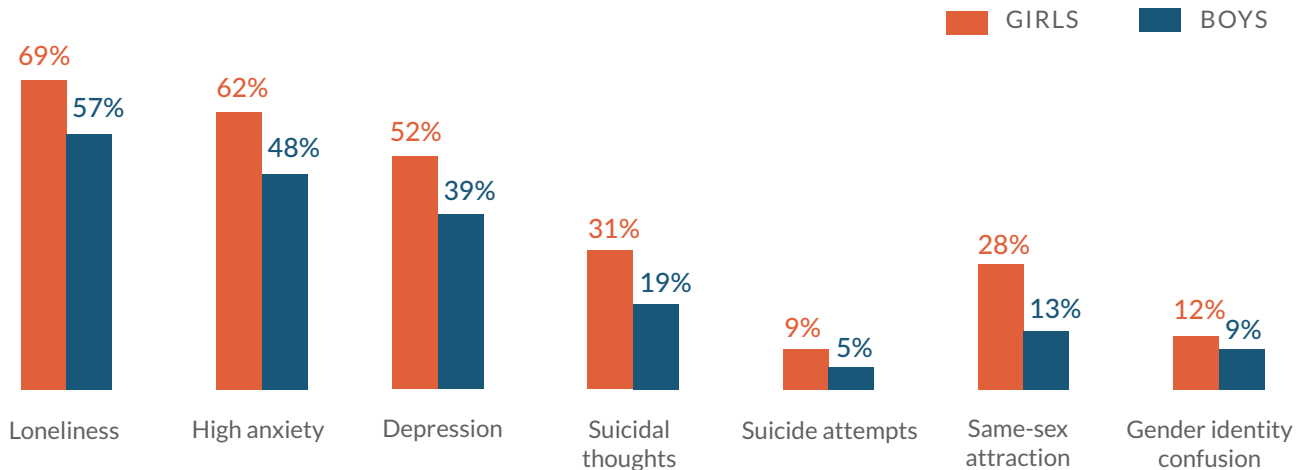


When it comes to suicidal thoughts and attempts, these are not just percentages on a page—they are real lives. These numbers are heartbreaking. Each one represents a young person who feels down enough about their life to want to end it. We must bring light into the darkness.

*“The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has shined.” —Matthew 4:16 (ESV)*

## GIRLS STRUGGLE MORE

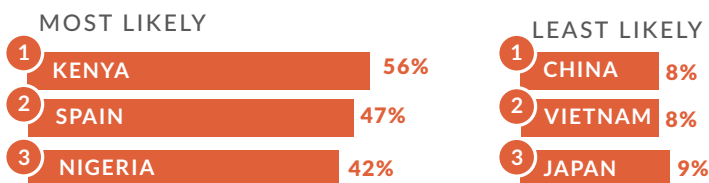
Teen girls are struggling much more than teen boys when it comes to their mental health outlook and identity with stark differences between girls and boys observed across regions and religions. Sadly, being a Committed Christian does not change the story here. Personal struggle rates drop overall among Committed Christians, but the significant gap remains between boys and girls on each of these items.



## Teens — Even Christians — Are Having Sex

Globally, 3 in 10 teens report being sexually active within the past three months with African teens the most likely to report sexual activity and teens in Asia least likely.

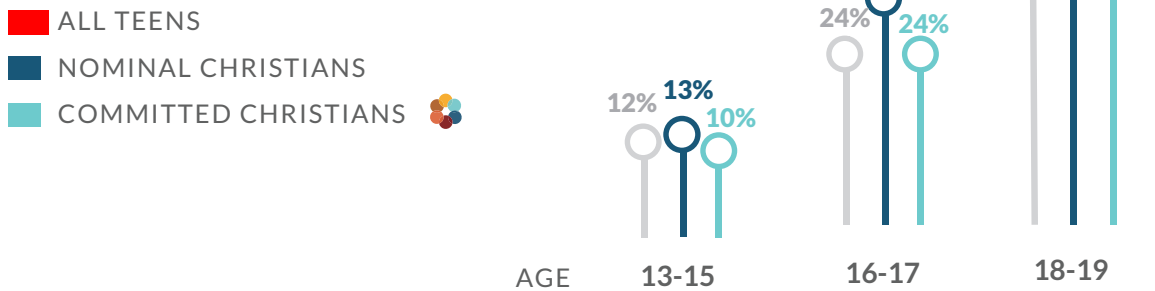
## SEXUALLY ACTIVE BY COUNTRY



Sexual activity was three times higher among older teens (18-19) as compared to younger teens (13-15). However, more than 1 in 10 teens under the age of 16 still reported recent sexual activity, with rates sometimes even higher among self-identified Christians.

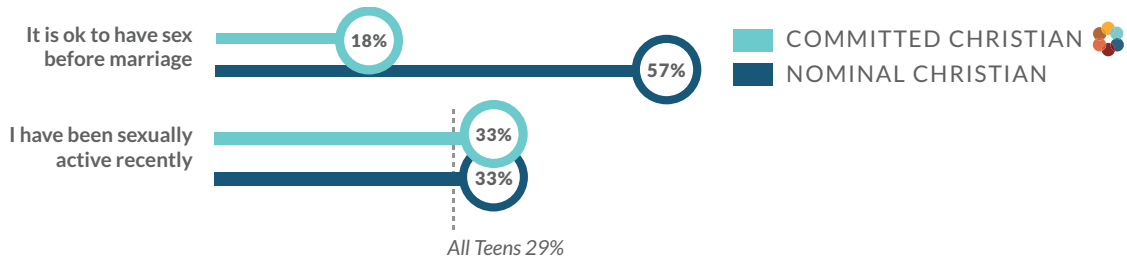
*Please Note: This represents a broad spectrum of potential behaviors, but in self-reporting on this question, teens defined for themselves what it means to be sexually active. Any teens who also reported being married were excluded to ensure this statistic represented only sex outside the context of marriage.*

## SEXUALLY ACTIVE BY AGE



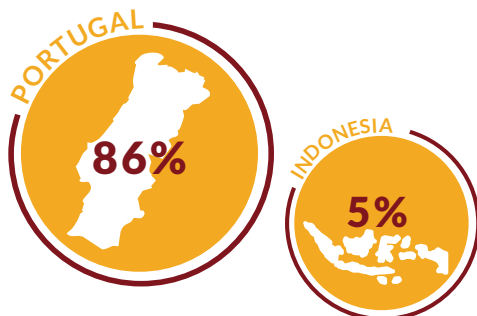
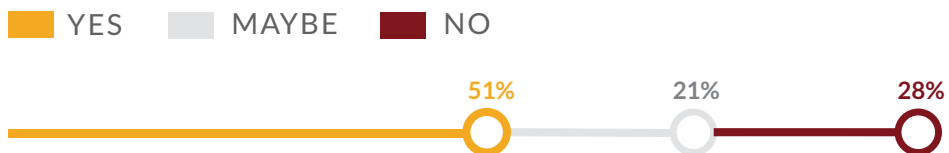
## CHRISTIAN TEENS Q&A

Teens are having sex whether or not they think it's right or wrong. Despite Biblical instruction that sex is reserved for marriage, Christian teens are engaging in sexual activity more than the average teen.



Different cultures hold different views on this issue.

## IS IT OKAY TO HAVE SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE?



HIGHEST/LOWEST YES RESPONSE

# Pornography Is Pervasive

Teens are exploring their sexuality.

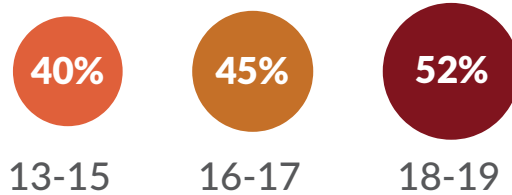
Nearly half (48%) of teens admit to looking at pornography.

Boys are more likely than girls to report looking at pornographic material within the last 3 months (56% vs 40%).

Older teens use pornography more than younger teens, but even the lowest rate is still a shocking 2 in 5!

48% OF TEENS ADMIT TO LOOKING AT PORNOGRAPHY.

## PORNOGRAPHY USAGE BY AGE



## CHRISTIAN TEENS Q & A

■ COMMITTED CHRISTIAN   
■ NOMINAL CHRISTIAN

I have looked at pornographic material recently.



# Conclusion

The physical and emotional temptations and struggles teens experience are frightening. Being aware of their reality, we can move from informed to empathic to action.

- **CHRISTIAN TEENS NEED DISCIPLESHIP IN THE AREA OF SEXUALITY.**

Many of today's young people are separating sex from the sacred context of marriage. Committed Christians demonstrate an understanding that pre-marital sex is wrong, but their moral convictions are not keeping them from acting on temptation. It's not enough just to teach teens what the Bible says; we have to figure out how to actively encourage young people to live out the biblical view that values and stewards the gift of sexuality.

- **PORNOGRAPHY USAGE IS A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE FOR THIS GENERATION.**

We cannot assume that age or religion protect a teen from sexual feelings and urges. The numbers reveal that even a teen who is walking with Jesus and regularly engaging in Scripture is likely to be struggling in this area.

- **GIRLS NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT.**

The differences in personal struggle rates by gender are undeniable, and the high rates among girls cannot be ignored. Consider the unique struggles girls face in regard to their gender and the fact that we will increasingly need to empower experienced women to disciple their younger counterparts, similar to the model that Titus 2:3-5 shares.





# DIGITAL CONNECTEDNESS AND IMPACT

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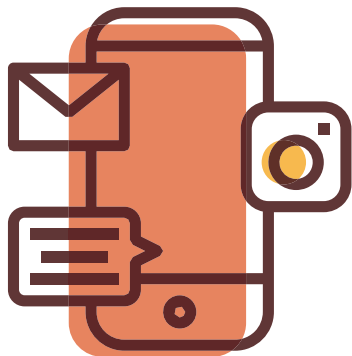
# What We Discovered



Teens are spending an average of **7 hours and 23 minutes** online daily.

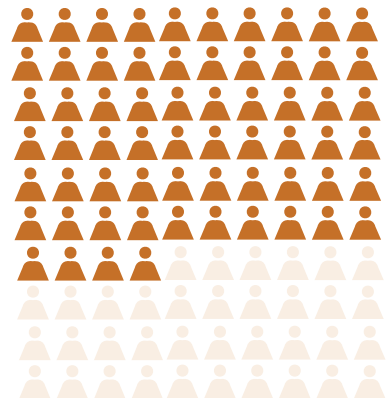
Teens who are **heavy internet users** (10+ hours daily) are **struggling more with their mental health.**

**94%** of teens say they **watch videos every day.**



The majority of teens say **social media contributes to their life satisfaction.**

**64%** of teens are using social media for **an hour or less daily.**



# Online Engagement

## TECH TIME BY REGION AND COUNTRY

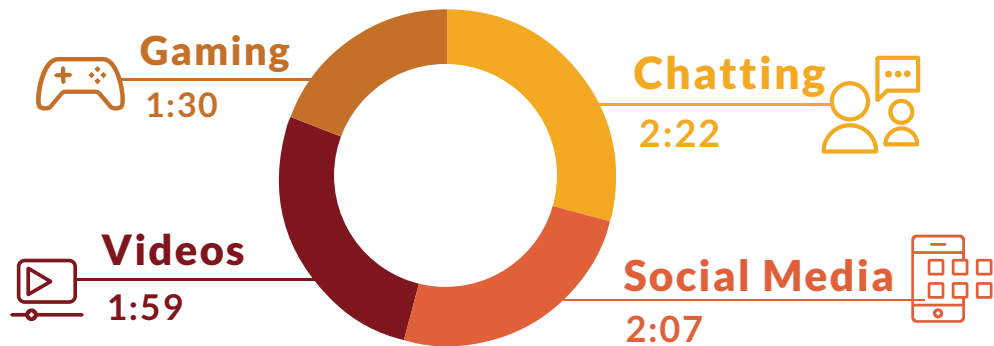
Today's teens are online all the time. Not literally, but close to it.



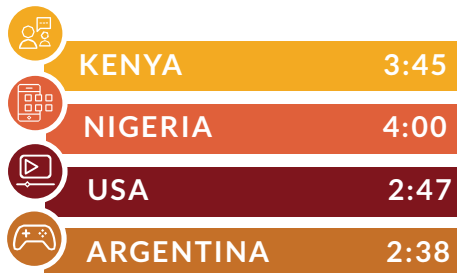
Teens are spending an average of 7 hours and 23 minutes online daily across the 20 countries surveyed. Young people in Brazil clock in the most time at nearly 9.5 hours online daily, and on the other end of the spectrum, teens in China report the least amount of time online daily, close to 5.5 hours.



## TIME SPENT BY ACTIVITY GLOBALLY



### TOP COUNTRY PER CATEGORY



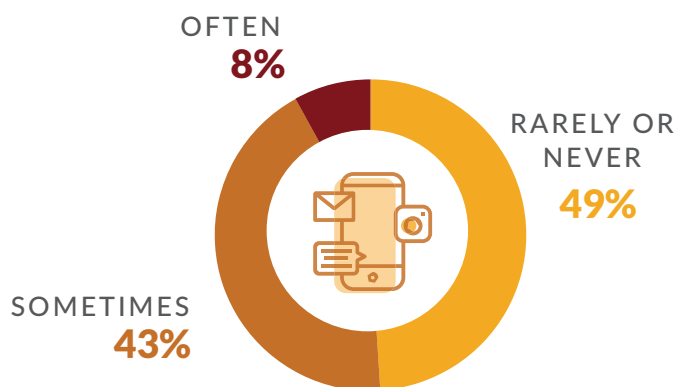
Nearly all teens use social media. Most (64%) spend less than 1 hour a day on these platforms and have very mixed emotions about their experiences:

- **3 in 5** teens say social media helps them feel satisfied with their lives.
- **More than 50%** of teens say it can make them feel sad, anxious, or depressed.



**94%** of teens watch videos every day.

## SOCIAL MEDIA MAKES ME FEEL SAD, ANXIOUS, OR DEPRESSED.



# The Tech Effect

There was a wide variety of responses from teens regarding their usage habits and time online, so we categorized respondents as light internet users (0-4 hours online daily); moderate internet users (4.1-9.9 hours daily); and heavy internet users (10+ hours online daily).

The different viewpoints in heavy vs. light internet users were very interesting.

Trends in the data show that connectedness maps to certain cultural viewpoints and opinions. For example, teens who are heavy internet users are more likely to say it is ok to have sex before marriage and that it is acceptable to change your body to become a different gender. Some of this is unsurprising, perhaps, given that teens who are spending a lot of time online may be exposed to a broader perspective of the world and of morality.

## INTERNET USAGE AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

**LIGHT INTERNET USERS**  
(0-4 hours online daily)

**HEAVY INTERNET USERS**  
(10+ hours online daily)

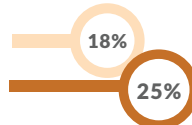


### GOALS

I would like to start a business or own my own company in the future.



The most important thing in my future career is how much it pays.



### FAMILY

Overall, my family experience has been good.



I talk to my parents about issues that really matter to me.

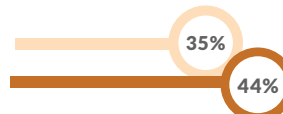


### BELIEF

I believe it is ok to have sex before marriage.



It is okay for someone to change their body to become a different gender.

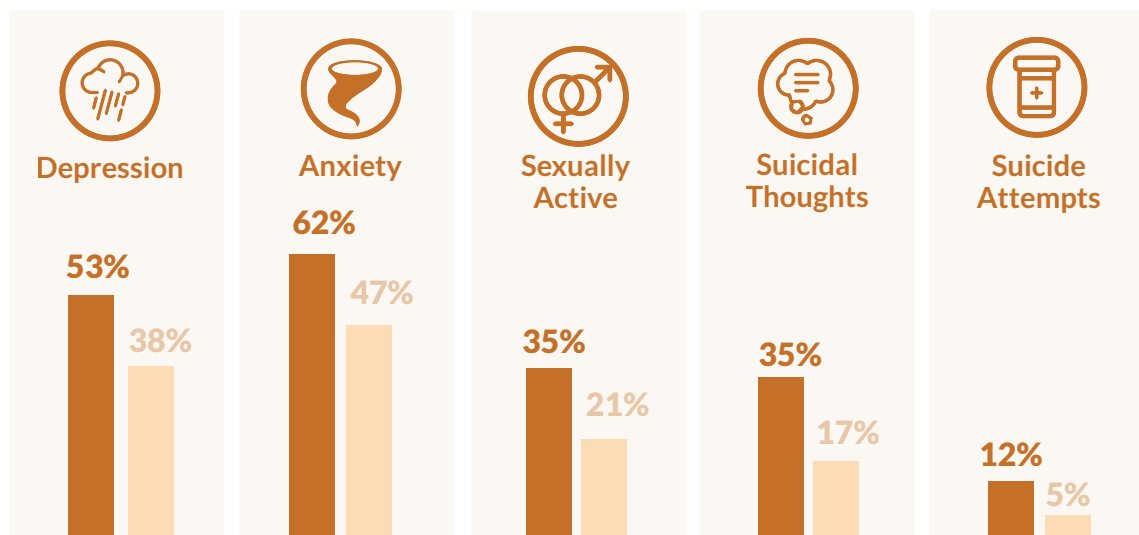


# Digital Meets Real Life

## INTERNET USE AND PERSONAL STRUGGLES

**LIGHT INTERNET USERS** (0-4 hours online daily)    **HEAVY INTERNET USERS** (10+ hours online daily)

*Within the past three months, I have experienced:*



When teen's online and real-life experiences were overlaid, the data clearly showed that heavy internet users suffer more mental health struggles.

While these findings are deeply concerning, the connection between increased time online and increased personal struggles is unclear. It is possible that heavy internet usage contributes to these personal struggles in the lives of young people. On the other hand, teens who are already struggling with their mental health may be turning to their digital devices as an attempt to escape.

We cannot forget that the teen years are filled with hormonal changes, social upsets, and other disruptions that can all contribute to a poor mental health outlook. Time spent on digital devices is just one more element in an already complex combination of factors affecting the lives and personal experiences of today's teens.

# Conclusion

Teens are online. Online is influencing teens. What do these facts mean to us? Here are some ideas to consider:

- **VIDEOS ARE TEENS' GO TO AND ARE A POWERFUL VEHICLE TO REACH YOUNG PEOPLE.** Remember, 94% of teens are engaging with videos every day. How can we use this appealing medium to reach young people for Christ?
- **SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO REACH TEENS.** However, most are not spending a lot of time on these platforms every day (64% spend 1 hour or less daily). When sharing content on social media, it's important to make sure your message is clear, so they don't just skim on by.
- **THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT THE TEEN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME ON A SCREEN MIGHT BE STRUGGLING DEEPLY.** Those who are spending a lot of time online may be dealing with some very serious mental health issues, so think about how you can be prepared to respond in conversations that might arise.



# IDENTITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

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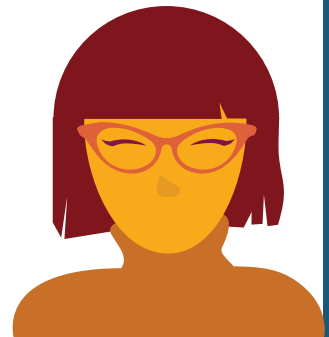


# What We Discovered

Around half of teens believe **gender is primarily based on the sex with which a person is born.**

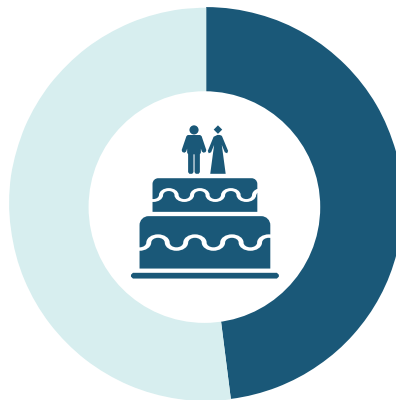


The other half believe it is something **a person determines for themselves** according to their personal **feelings or sexual attractions.**



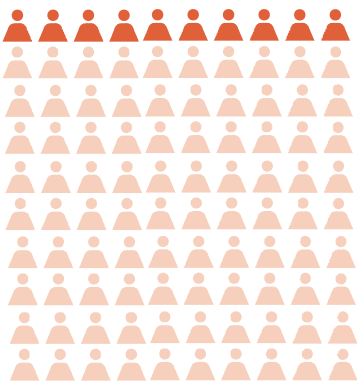
## Girls

have a **less traditional** view of marriage than boys.



**48%**

of teens globally believe marriage **should not be exclusively** between a man and a woman.



**1 in 7**

teens overall hold to a **scriptural view** of sex and marriage.



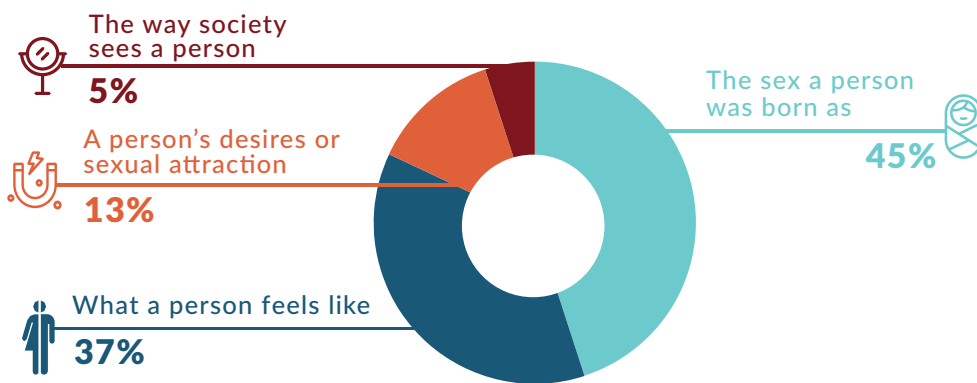
Teens are satisfied with their relationships, with **82%** reporting their **family experience has been good overall** and the same number saying they have **close friends who know them well.**

# Gender Identity as a Choice

We can't measure all of the highly complex aspects involved in how teens form their identity, but we can learn from how they view themselves and others.

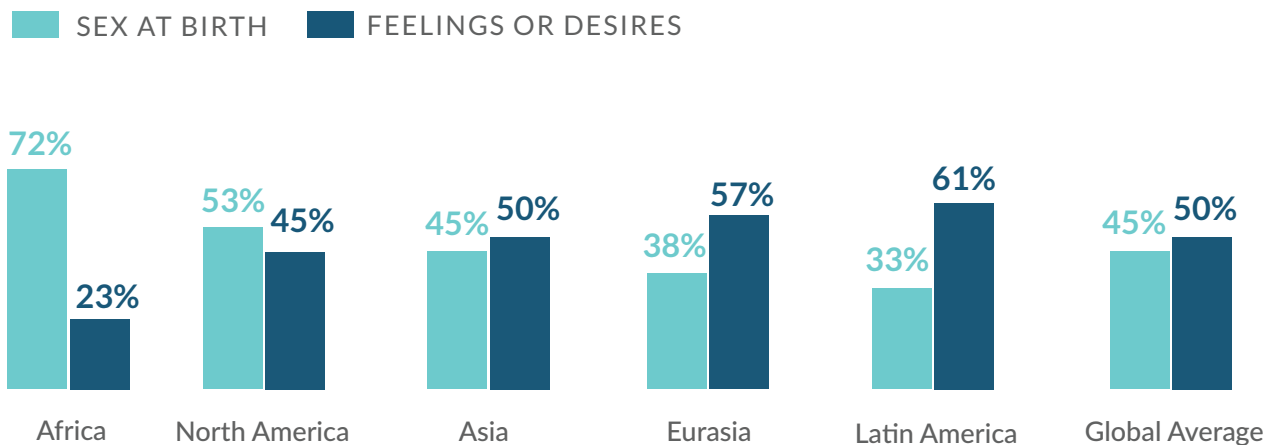
Teens are split right down the middle when it comes to gender. Around half of teens globally say that it is primarily based on the sex a person is born as. But the other half of today's teens believe gender is a choice—something that can be self-determined according to personal feelings or a person's sexual attractions.

## GENDER IS PRIMARILY BASED ON



In many places of the world, this opinion is either more or less pronounced.

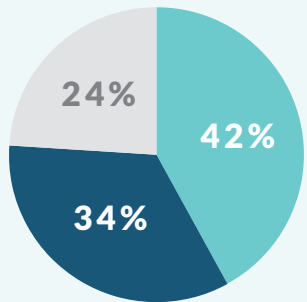
## VIEW OF GENDER BY REGION



## GENDER IDENTITY AND CHANGE

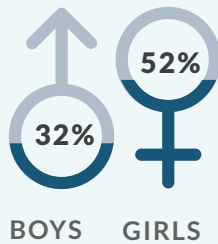
Is it ok for someone to change their body to become a different gender?

● YES ● NO ● MAYBE

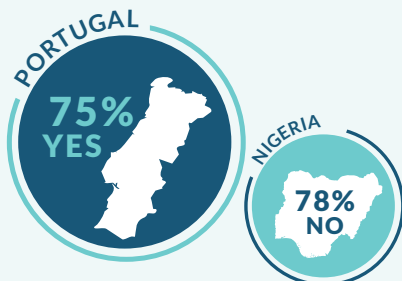


### GENDER DIVIDE

#### RESPONDED YES



### COUNTRY HOTSPOTS



Many teens also believe that if a person feels they are a different gender, they should be able to do something about it. 2 in 5 teens globally say it is acceptable for someone to change their body to become a different gender, but opinions vary widely by region and country.

- While they are unwilling to dialogue about religion or morality, (see p.7) teens have definite opinions about gender identity.
- 10% of teens globally say they have experienced gender identity confusion within the past 3 months.
- 15% say they feel they would be most themselves as a different gender.
- Girls are just slightly more likely than boys to say they are struggling with their gender identity (12% vs 9%).
- The majority of girls (59%) believe gender is primarily based on a person's feelings or desires as compared with significantly fewer (42%) boys who say the same.
- Girls are also much more likely than boys to say it is ok for someone to change their body to become a different gender (52% vs 32%).

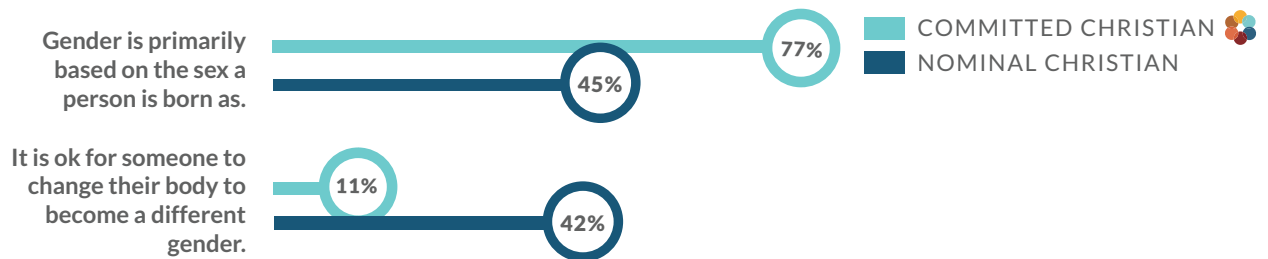
# The Role of Religion

Religion impacts a teen's opinion on gender identity.

- **63%** of non-religious teens believe gender is self-determined based on how a person feels or their sexual attractions.
- **62%** of Muslim teens say gender is based on sex at birth.
- **50%** of Christian teens say gender is based on sex at birth.

Being a Committed Christian increases the influence on a teen's opinion of the gender issue.

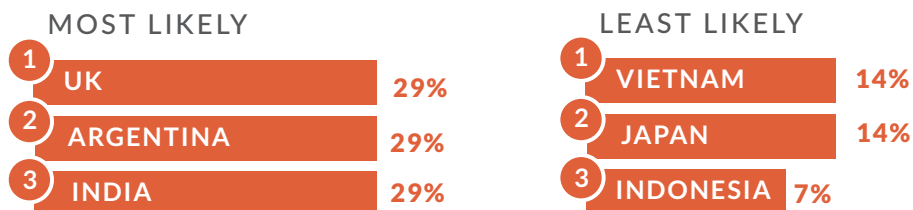
## CHRISTIAN TEENS Q & A



Christian teens aren't immune to same-sex attraction.



## SAME-SEX ATTRACTED BY COUNTRY



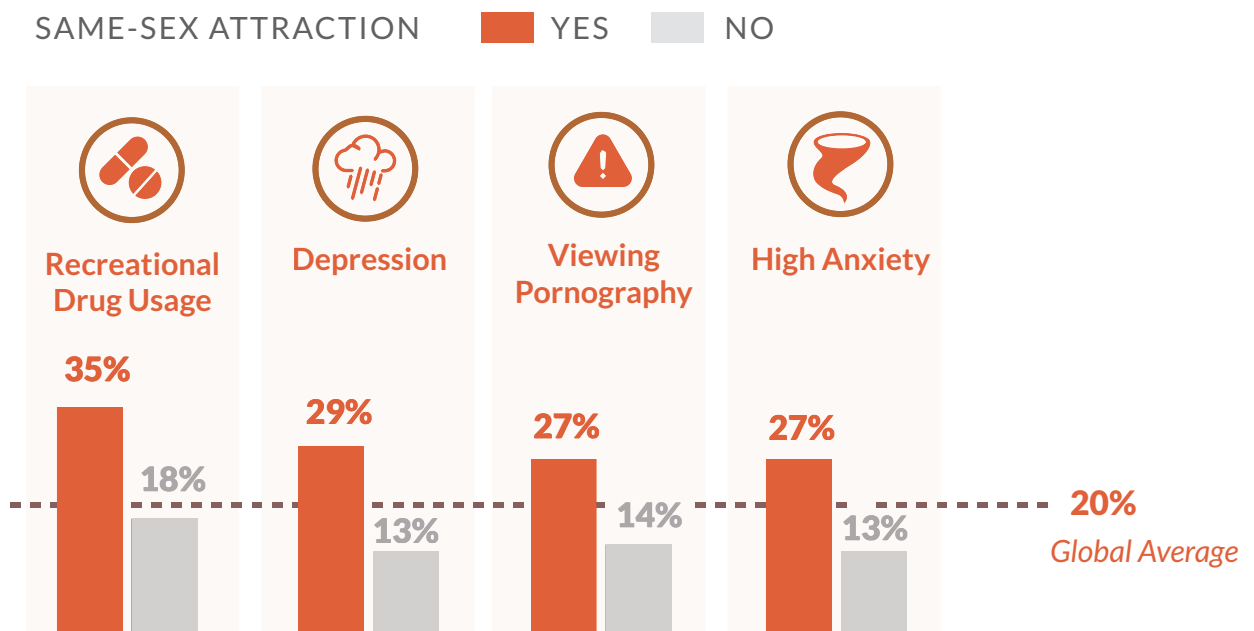
# Connections with Same-Sex Attraction

A deep dive into the data revealed several interesting connections:

- **Girls** are twice as likely to be same-sex attracted as boys (28% vs 13%).
  - Teens who say they have had a **poor family experience** are more likely to report experiencing same-sex attraction than if they had a good family experience (30% vs 18%).
  - Teens who identify with any kind of **religion** are less likely to be same-sex attracted as compared to teens who report they have no religion (18% vs 25%).
- Same-sex attraction also drops drastically among **Muslims (13%)** and **Committed Christians (12%)**.

Same-sex attraction is rarely stand-alone; it seems to cluster with other behaviors.

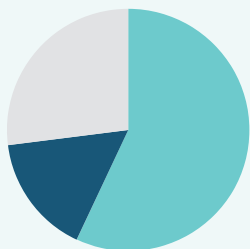
## 4 FACTORS THAT CORRELATE WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTION



# A Deteriorating View of Marriage

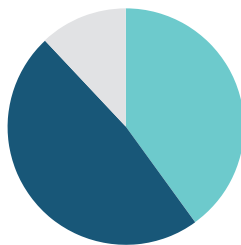
## TEENS ON MARRIAGE

Should marriage be a lifelong commitment?



● YES 57% ● NO 16% ● MAYBE 27%

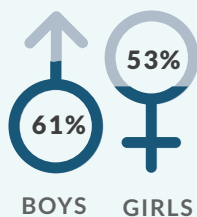
Should marriage be exclusively between a man and a woman?



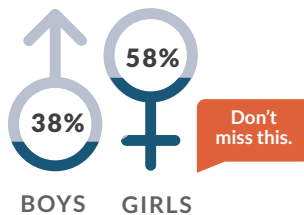
● YES 40% ● NO 48% ● MAYBE 12%

### GENDER DIVIDE

RESPONDED YES



RESPONDED NO



Teenagers are rejecting traditional beliefs about marriage.

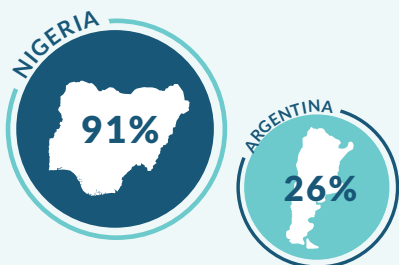
- **57%** believe marriage should be a lifelong commitment.
- **27%** are not sure.
- **16%** disagree.

A solid half (48%) of teens say marriage does not have to be exclusively between a man and a woman, while (40%) say it should be.

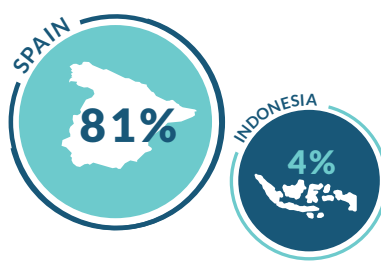
Girls have a different perspective on marriage than boys. On average, girls are less likely to believe marriage should be a lifelong commitment (53% vs 61%) and much more likely to say marriage does not have to be exclusively between a man and a woman (58% vs 38%).

Different cultures have different opinions on marriage. For instance, teens in Africa are more likely to have a traditional view of marriage than Latin American teens.

### COUNTRY HOTSPOTS



HIGHEST/LOWEST YES RESPONSE

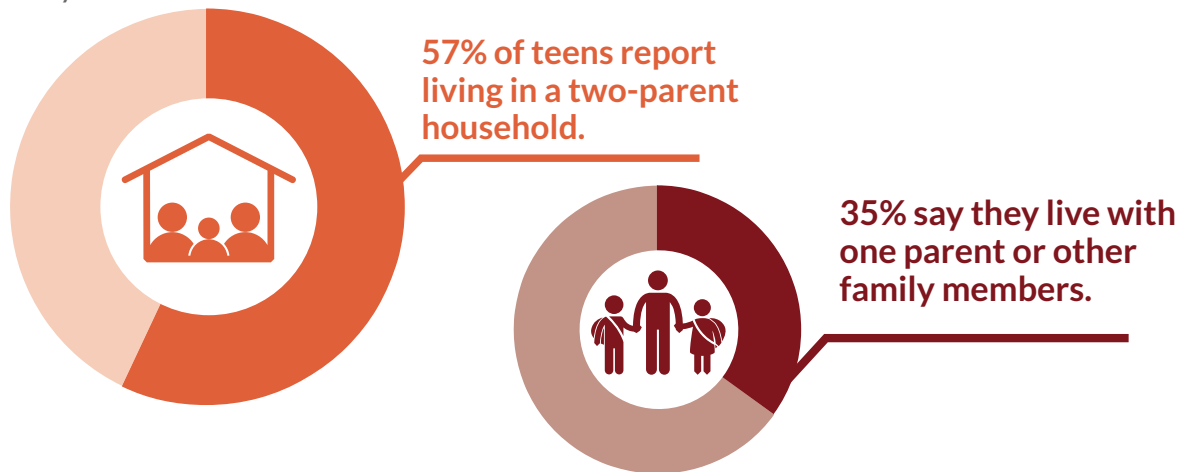


HIGHEST/LOWEST NO RESPONSE

A biblical view of marriage is very much a minority opinion. Only **1 in 7** teens believe that marriage should be a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman and that sex should be saved for the context of marriage.

# Friend and Family Relationships

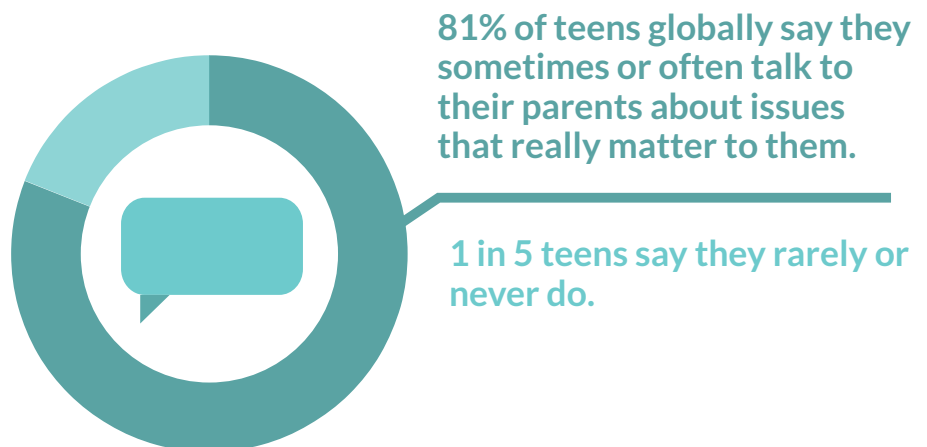
**There is good news!** The vast majority of teens (82%) say they are satisfied with their friend and family relationships. This is a remarkable majority considering the wide variety of families, cultures, and circumstances represented in the study.



India was the only country in our study where these stats were reversed. **Nearly half (47%) of teens in India say they live with one parent, and just 20% live with two.**

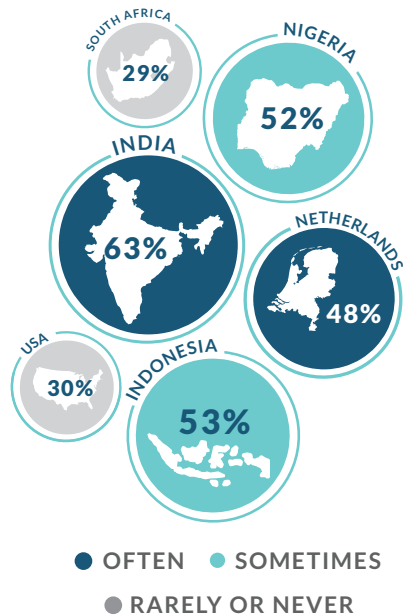
Interestingly, 93% of Indian teens report being the most satisfied with their family experience of any of the 20 countries in our study.

Having important conversations with their parents can be something that helps teens feel closer to their family.



# The High and Low

I talk to my parents/guardians about issues that really matter to me.

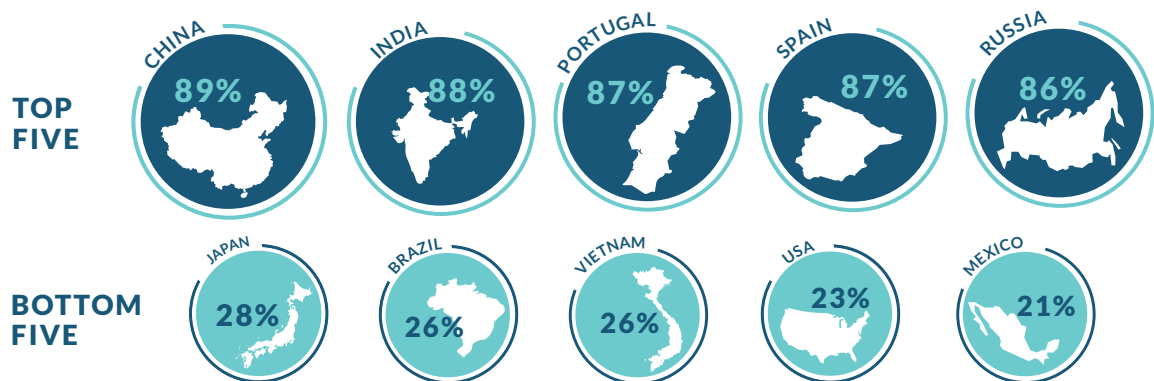


- **High:** 63% of teens in India say they often talk to their parents about issues that really matter to them.
- **Low:** 3 in 10 U.S. teens said their family experience has not been good overall.

In addition to family, teens also highly value strong friendships in their lives.

82% OF TEENS GLOBALLY SAY THEY HAVE CLOSE FRIENDS WHO KNOW THEM WELL.

## COUNTRY HOTSPOT FOR FRIEND SATISFACTION



Religion and gender don't seem to matter when it comes to teens finding satisfaction with their friends and family. Responses from both boys and girls as well as teens of different religions were quite similar when it came to reporting close friendships, a positive family experience, and whether or not they are having meaningful conversations with their parents.



# Conclusion

The teenage identity is complicated, so are relationships! But that doesn't mean we sit back and watch teens flounder trying to figure out who they are and where they belong in community and society. A good place to start is with the data that surprised you. Here are a few data points that surprised us:

- **HALF OF TODAY'S TEENS BELIEVE GENDER IS SOMETHING THAT CAN BE SELF-DETERMINED ACCORDING TO ONE'S PERSONAL FEELINGS OR SEXUAL DESIRES.**

In this kind of landscape, how do we present what the Bible has to say about our created identity to young people who believe gender is their choice and their right?

- **TEENS ARE SHIFTING AWAY FROM A TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF MARRIAGE AS A LIFELONG COMMITMENT BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN.**

How do we help teens not only understand God's plan for marriage, but also the benefits of commitment when it comes to covenant?

- **GIRLS HAVE A LESS BIBLICAL VIEW OF MARRIAGE THAN BOYS AND MAY BE EXPERIENCING GENDER IDENTITY ISSUES MORE STRONGLY.**

How can we turn this awareness into healthy support for girls that guides them to reflect more deeply on what God has to say about these topics?

- **TEENS ARE QUITE SATISFIED WITH THEIR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.**

It was interesting to see that Indian teens are the most happy with their family experience, even though they are more often living in single parent homes. This seems to indicate young people typically love their families no matter their makeup or the difficulties they may have faced on the journey.



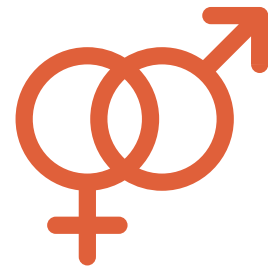
# INFLUENCES AND GUIDING VOICES

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# What We Discovered

## MEANING OF LIFE

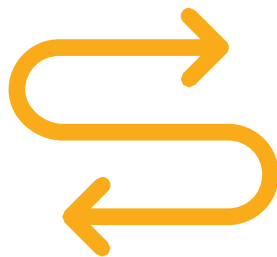
Teens say **family** is their go-to for guidance on some of life's most important questions such as what is right and wrong and the meaning of life.



## GENDER AND SEXUALITY

**Social media and friends** are teens' top influences when it comes to conversations about gender and sexuality.

**Personal experiences** are the number one reason teens say they would **change their mind about a religious belief.**



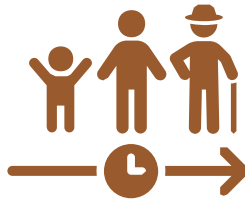
Relatively few Christian teens say **teachings from their pastor** would be the primary reason they would change their mind about a religious belief.



**Committed Christian** teens are four times more likely than Nominal Christian teens to **turn to their pastors or Bibles** for guidance.

# Teens Trust Family

## MEANING OF LIFE CONVERSATIONS



- 1 FAMILY MEMBERS 41%
- 2 SOCIAL MEDIA 20%
- 3 FRIENDS/PEERS 19%
- 4 TEACHERS/COUNSELORS 7%
- 5 OFFLINE MEDIA 7%
- 6 RELIGIOUS LEADERS/TEXTS 7%

## RIGHT AND WRONG CONVERSATIONS



- 1 FAMILY MEMBERS 50%
- 2 FRIENDS/PEERS 16%
- 3 SOCIAL MEDIA 14%
- 4 TEACHERS/COUNSELORS 9%
- 5 RELIGIOUS LEADERS/TEXTS 7%
- 6 OFFLINE MEDIA 5%

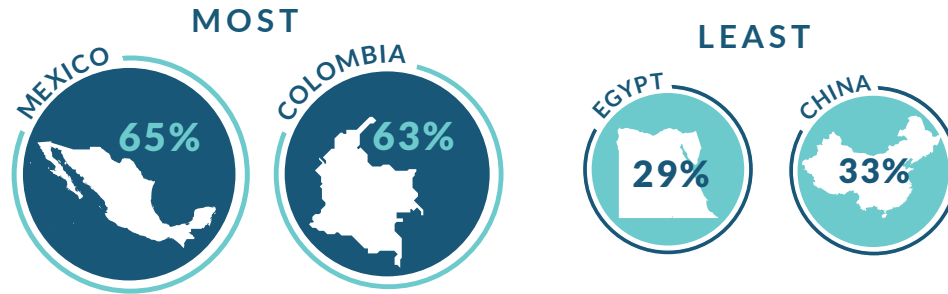
Teens might voice strong opinions, but they are often uncertain and simply an echo of someone else's point of view. Though far from exhaustive, this data gives us insight into how today's teens form their perspectives.

Teens tell us they turn to family most often for guidance on some of life's most important topics. **Family members are the top influence when it comes to questions around the meaning of life or what is right and wrong.** Friends or peers and social media round out teens' top three influences with teachers or counselors, religious leaders or texts, and offline media ranking much lower on their list.

What one believes about life's ultimate purpose and where morality comes from has profound implications for how one will behave. These two foundational questions are critical in the all-important teen years when young people are establishing their worldview—the set of guiding beliefs—that they will carry forward with them into adulthood.

When it comes to morality, teens in Latin America lean more strongly on family than teens in any other region of the world. 3 in 5 teens in Latin America say family is their go-to for information or guidance on what is right and wrong. But even in countries where rates of agreement were much lower, family remained the top answer choice of those offered.

## FAMILY INFLUENCE ON RIGHT AND WRONG BY COUNTRY

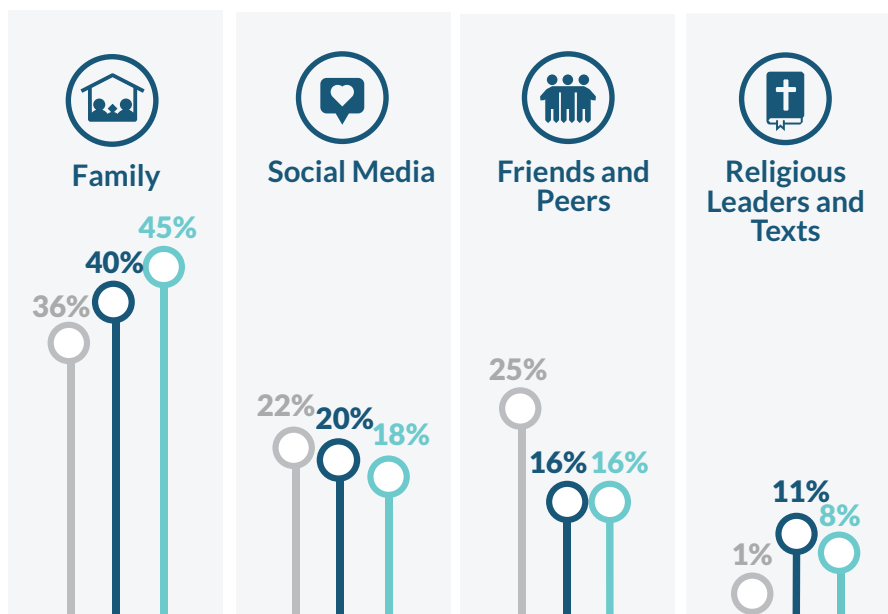


Family remains an important guiding voice for teens even in countries where young people report negative family experiences. For example, the United States is the lowest ranking country in terms of teens' family satisfaction. However, U.S. teens are higher than average in saying they go to family most often for information or guidance about what is right and wrong (52%) or the meaning of life (42%). It would appear that despite bumps along the journey, parents and family members continue to be trusted influences in teens' lives.

Teens' influences look different depending on their religion. Christians are more likely than other teens to be turning to their family for guidance about the meaning of life, and slightly less likely to be looking to social media or friends and peers. Fewer than 1 in 10 Christian teens say they are going to their pastors or their Bibles most often for guidance on the meaning of life.

## INFLUENCES BY RELIGION - MEANING OF LIFE

■ NO RELIGION ■ OTHER RELIGIONS ■ CHRISTIAN



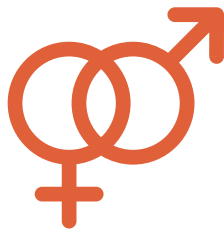
This is not a typo, we're re-copying this point because it's so important.

**Only 1 in 12 Christian teens say they are going to their pastors or their Bibles most often for guidance on the meaning of life.**

Take a minute to let this sink in, and pray for this generation that can so often look for truth and meaning in all the wrong places.

## *Gender and Sexuality is a Different Conversation*

### GENDER & SEXUALITY CONVERSATIONS



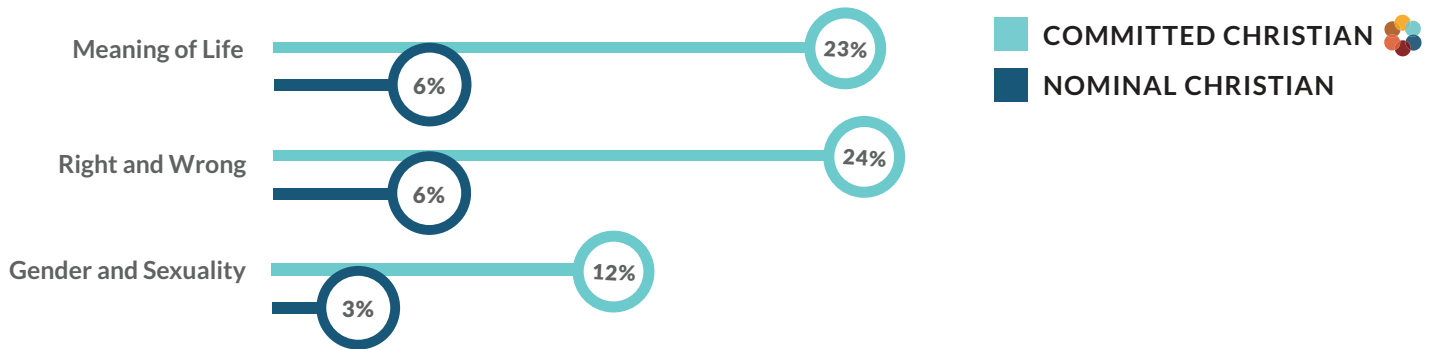
- 1 SOCIAL MEDIA **36%**
- 2 FRIENDS/PEERS **23%**
- 3 FAMILY MEMBERS **20%**
- 4 TEACHERS/COUNSELORS **11%**
- 5 OFFLINE MEDIA **6%**
- 6 RELIGIOUS LEADERS/TEXTS **4%**

**1 in 3 teens say they turn to social media most often for information or guidance on the topics of gender, sexuality, and sexual issues.** Teens most often turn to the Internet to be their guiding voice; then, they look to friends or peers for affirmation, and thirdly consult with family. Once again, religious leaders or texts fall to the very bottom of the list.

Even among Christians, social media displaces family as teens' top influence on these topics. This shows that when it comes to gender and sexuality, social opinions are loud. Even for those who are walking with Christ, the voice of culture appears to be drowning out other voices such as Scripture or the Church.

However, we do see significant differences among Committed Christians who hold to the core beliefs of Christianity and have a habit of Bible reading and prayer. These teens are paying more attention to their spiritual leaders and to God's Word. Committed Christian teens are around four times more likely than Nominal Christians to say they are going to religious leaders or texts for guidance.

## GO TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS OR TEXTS FOR INFORMATION OR GUIDANCE ABOUT...



## What would Change their Mind

Influences help inform and shape opinions, but at the end of the day each person must decide for themselves what they will believe and how strongly they will cling to that belief.

We wanted to find out what it would take to change a teen's mind on religious beliefs they already hold. For most, a personal experience — such as an answer to prayer — appeared to be the most compelling opportunity for them to change a belief.

WHAT WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT A RELIGIOUS BELIEF?



- 1 PERSONAL EXPERIENCES SUCH AS AN ANSWER TO PRAYER: **37%**
- 2 MY OWN INVESTIGATION ONLINE OR IN BOOKS: **26%**
- 3 A CONVERSATION WITH MY PARENTS: **18%**
- 4 TEACHINGS FROM RELIGIOUS LEADERS: **12%**
- 5 A CONVERSATION WITH FRIENDS: **8%**

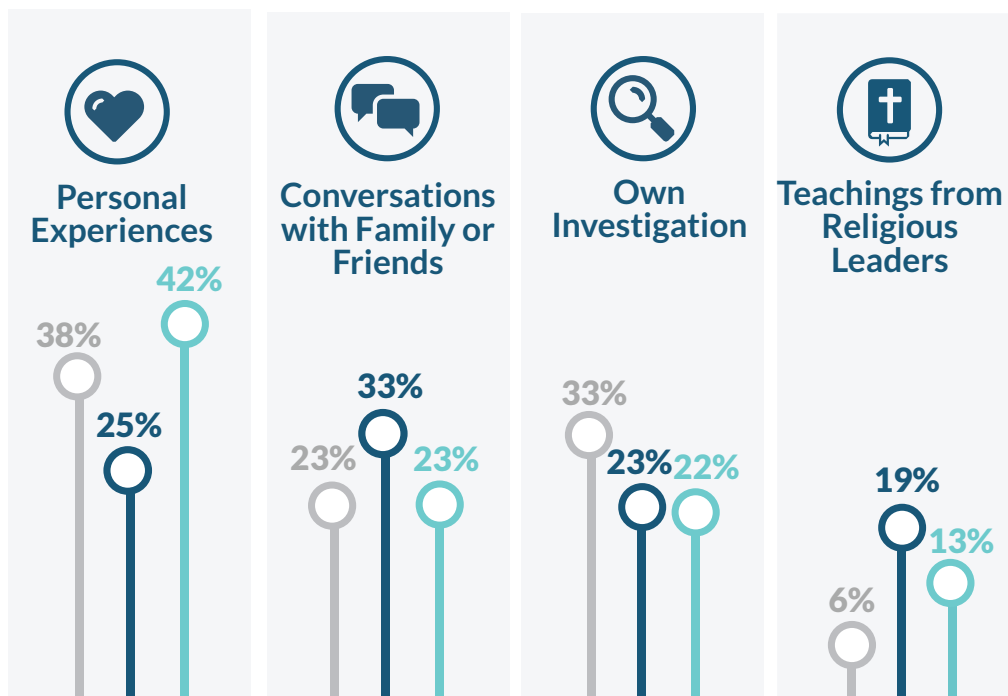
Once again, Indian teens were dramatically different where nearly half (46%) said a conversation with their parents would be the most likely to change their mind and personal experiences ranked much lower (15%).

Teens of no religion rely heavily on their own investigation, but even so, say they would be more moved by a personal experience. Christians are even more likely than teens of other religions to say that personal experiences would change their mind. Of all religions, Muslims\* place the least emphasis on personal experiences and the most on teachings from their religious leaders.

\*Muslims are the largest group included in the section: Other Religion in the chart below.

## MOST LIKELY TO CHANGE THEIR MIND ABOUT A RELIGIOUS BELIEF

■ NO RELIGION ■ OTHER RELIGIONS ■ CHRISTIAN





# Conclusion

The teens have spoken and identified their top influencers and guiding voices. Are we listening? Here are some things to consider about their responses:

- **WHEN IT COMES TO SOME OF LIFE'S MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS—TEENS ULTIMATELY TRUST AND TURN TO THEIR FAMILY FOR GUIDANCE.** Parents should not take lightly the privilege they have of speaking into their child's life and influencing their opinions and actions.
- **SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH ARE BEING DROWNED OUT BY CULTURE IN THE CONVERSATION AROUND GENDER AND SEXUALITY.** Culture—via social media and peers—is loud and pervasive, and it is setting the standard for teens on these important topics. How can we step up as leaders in this space to highlight what God has to say even if it conflicts with popular opinion?
- **PERSONAL EXPERIENCES ARE HUGELY INFLUENTIAL IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.** Teens who are already walking with Christ continue to be hungry for authentic experiences of their faith, and even those who say God does not exist are open to changing their mind if they personally encountered Him. How can we help create environments and opportunities for those experiences to happen?



## LETTER FROM ROB HOSKINS

### *Are We Listening?*

In light of this research, we now know exactly who and what are influencing today's youth. The task of raising up a godly generation in the midst of a post-truth culture seems impossible, but ours is not the God of the impossible; He's the God of the inevitable.

While we may not have experienced the same things during our formative years that our young people are facing today, research — like this report — is revelatory. From it, we can mine the reality of what challenges our youth are facing on a daily basis.

These pages clearly expose that teens crave wise counsel on topics culture has muddied like gender and sexuality. The astonishing rates of personal struggles and suicidal ideation/attempts among our young are their clear cry for help. In this sea of chaos, don't lose heart because there is good news! Teens view families — biological or spiritual — as the first place they turn when they have to make big decisions about their lives.

Unfortunately, it seems that instead of turning to sources of actual truth found in God's Word, pastors, and the Church, our youth are doing Google and YouTube searches to find the answers for who they are and what is their purpose. Their confusion is not new. In fact, I think today's teens closely resemble doubting Thomas in John 14:5-6, when he asks a big life question, "How do we know the way?"

As our teens attempt to navigate a world where culture is both pervasive and persuasive, it's our job to help guide them to timeless truth. We must point them to Jesus, who responds to doubt, confusion, and questions with words that ring as true today as they did in Thomas's time. The next generation needs to know that their answers aren't in the cloud, but that no matter how complex, confusing, and problematic this world may be, they can always find the truth and get their bearings with His response:

*"I am the way."*

## About OneHope

In partnership with local churches, ministries, and governments around the world, OneHope has reached more than 1.6 billion children and youth with God's Word. Based on in-country research OneHope conducts, Scripture programs are designed to be age and culturally relevant. Since 1987, OneHope has helped kids experience God's Story, sharing the life-changing message of hope with children and youth in every country. To learn more, visit [onehope.net](http://onehope.net).

## Methodology

The study surveyed 8,394 teens ages 13-19 across 20 countries. In each country, a representative sample of approximately 400 teens provided the statistical power to be 95% confident that percentage results were within 5% of the true population percentage for teens ages 13 to 19, and to perform corresponding statistical tests. For multi-country regions and globally, the level of confidence was even higher and the margin of error lower.

In 5 countries (China, Egypt, India, Japan, and Vietnam), quotas were used to ensure at least 10% of respondents were Christian in order to have a meaningful sample size for religious-based analysis and comparisons. In several other countries, minimum 10% target sample sizes for Christians or Muslims were met or approximated without using quotas. A sampling quota was also used in Kenya to ensure at least 40% of respondents were female.

The instrument was distributed via Centiment Research. As a quality control measure, respondents were disqualified if they incorrectly answered a simple attention-check question. The research instrument consisted of 70 base questions, with several additional questions customized for each region to explore specific topics of interest.

# Data Collection

Data for this study was collected from February 24, 2020, to March 27, 2020. We believe this research accurately reflects teens' beliefs and behaviors before they began feeling widespread effects from shelter in place and quarantine orders which might be expected to affect data points including total time spent online and mental health indicators including depression, anxiety, and others examined as part of this study. In every country with the exception of China, data collection was completed before a national lockdown was imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. China was the notable exception as the epicenter of the pandemic with the earliest lockdown procedures.

COUNTRY	DATA COLLECTION DATES
Argentina	February 27 - March 2, 2020
Brazil	February 27 - March 11, 2020
China	February 27 - March 6, 2020
Colombia	February 27 - March 2, 2020
Egypt	February 27 - March 9, 2020
India	February 28 - March 17, 2020
Indonesia	February 27 - March 7, 2020
Japan	February 27 - March 23, 2020
Kenya	February 25 - March 27, 2020
Mexico	February 27 - March 2, 2020
Netherlands	February 27 - March 8, 2020
Nigeria	February 24 - March 20, 2020
Portugal	March 7 - March 18, 2020
Romania	February 28 - March 13, 2020
Russia	February 27 - March 2, 2020
South Africa	February 24 - March 7, 2020
Spain	March 7 - March 13, 2020
United Kingdom	February 24 - March 3, 2020
United States	February 24 - February 29, 2020
Vietnam	March 13 - March 26, 2020

# Definitions

## COMMITTED CHRISTIAN

Teens who self-identified as Christian, but not as Jehovah's Witness or Mormon, and who met the following criteria:

- Believe God exists and that they can have a personal relationship with Him.
- Believe Jesus is the Son of God.
- Believe that forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Believe the Bible is the Word of God.
- Read Scripture on their own at least weekly.
- Pray daily or weekly.

Note that committed Christian teens may be Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Orthodox, or any other Christian denomination.

## NOMINAL CHRISTIANS

Teens who self-identified as Christian, but not as Jehovah's Witness or Mormon, and who did not meet the criteria of core beliefs or habits established for Committed Christians.

## OTHER RELIGIONS

Teens who self-identified as Buddhist, Hindu, Jew, Muslim, or other religions.

## NO RELIGION

Teens who self-identified as atheist, agnostic, or none of the above.

## QUESTIONS?

Questions about this research? Contact [research@onehope.net](mailto:research@onehope.net)



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# GLOBAL YOUTH CULTURE

