

gen ✦ Alpha

THE NEXT GENERATION



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INTRODUCTION

Generation Alpha refers to children and teens born between 2010 and 2024. The term Gen Alpha was coined to signal the start of something new. Gen Alphas make up approximately 13% of the United States, with more to come.¹ These young people will grow up in an ever-evolving world, developing unique and diverse viewpoints as a result of their life experiences.

After reviewing existing studies on Gen Alpha, the OneHope Research Team recognized a gap: most research focuses on marketing and education, rather than the habits, struggles, faith beliefs, and influences of young people.² In response, we conducted primary research with 11 to 13-year-olds in the United States to learn about their beliefs and perspectives. Throughout this report, we refer to these young people as preteens.

You'll have a chance to meet some Gen Alphas as you explore the report. The details of these personas are fictionalized, but they are based on the themes and categories that emerged from the data. Personas help us go beyond numbers to connect more deeply with the stories and lives the data represents. These portrayals may be so life-like that they sound a lot like a young person you know!

We still have much to learn about Gen Alpha, but already we can identify some broad themes that are emerging:

- **Diverse:** Gen Alpha preteens are consuming vast amounts of global media, are growing up in varied and changing family situations, and are reflecting greater racial and ethnic diversity..
- **Connected:** Young people are spending most of their free time online and indicate they would spend more if they could. The online landscape is shaping their future social, educational, and professional lives in ways we cannot yet anticipate.
- **Vulnerable:** Gen Alpha reports high rates of mental health challenges and early exposure to sex and pornography. They are young people growing up fast in an adult world.
- **Rooted:** Preteens express a high level of satisfaction with their family life. Many say that family members/parents are their number one source for guidance on life's important issues.

About the Research

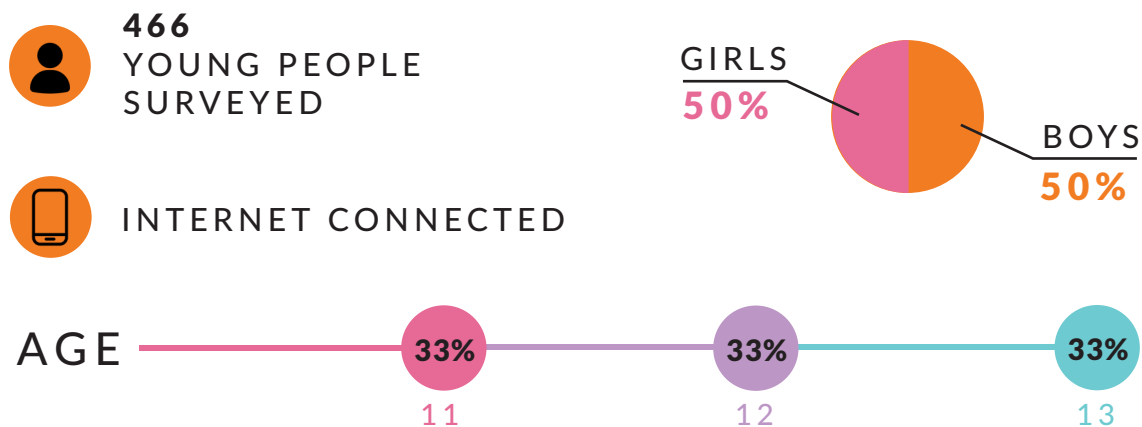
- 📍 United States
- 📅 March 2024
- 👤 466 internet-connected young people
- 🕒 Ages 11-13
- 🔍 49 item survey

¹ As of July 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/296974/us-population-share-by-generation/>

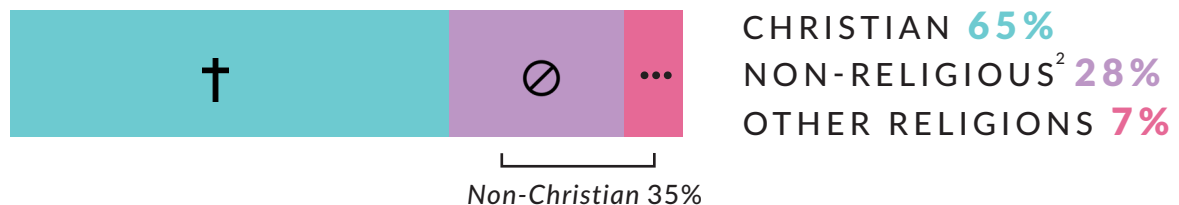
² OneHope released a secondary research study on Gen Alpha in 2023, which you can find on the OneHope Research Website <https://onehope.net/research>.

ABOUT THE PRETEENS

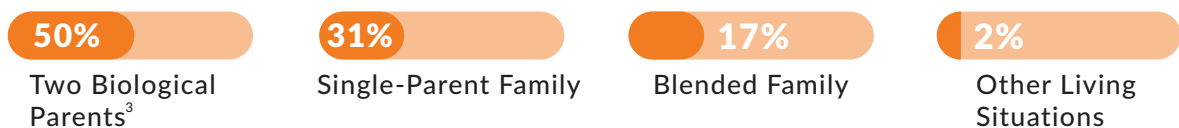
OneHope designed this research study to learn about the beliefs, behaviors, and influences of Gen Alpha. In March 2024, we worked with a professional data collection company to distribute the online survey to preteens ages 11-13 across the United States.¹ The number of young people surveyed was selected to ensure these results accurately represent this age group.



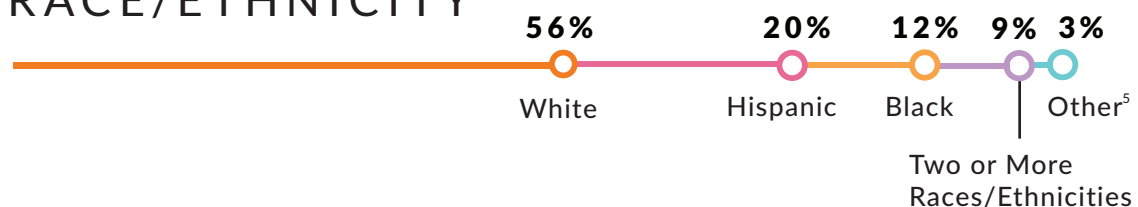
RELIGION



HOUSEHOLD



RACE/ETHNICITY⁴



¹ Since the survey was conducted online, this data only represents internet-using preteens, not all preteens in the US.

² Includes atheists, agnostics, and those who selected none of the above.

³ Refers to families where the survey respondent said they live with both biological parents who are married.

⁴ Race and ethnic groups are exclusive except for 'Two or More.'

⁵ Other races and ethnic groups include American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Island, and Other.

Gen Alpha + Faith

MEET GEN ALPHA

Say hello to 12-year-old **Liam**.

He doesn't really believe in religion. His friends and family are what are important to him, and he respects what they believe. Sometimes when he's lonely, he does pray. He asks whatever God might be out there to send him people who will love him (and good grades!). The Christians he knows act and talk a lot like he does, so he doesn't understand what's so special about being a Christian. But he's been invited to church recently by a friend and he's planning to go sometime—when he has time.



@liam_the.man

Ronaldo ⚽



Meet **Olivia**, who just turned 11 years old.

She calls herself a Christian because her family is, and they go to church pretty often. But she also carries healing crystals like some of her friends do, and she loves talking about astrology signs. She follows a lot of influencers who share about manifesting your desires. Some promise that good things happen if you believe in God. But for all her affirmations and prayers, she's not really seeing any change in her life, so she's not sure what to believe.



@liveloughlove_livi

👉 faithhopelove 💕

✨ yes I believe in fate! 🧙‍♀️

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

65%

of Gen Alpha self-identify as Christian.

16%

display the beliefs and habits of an Emerging Committed Christian.

3 in 4 preteens say their faith beliefs, religion, or spiritual journey are an important part of their identity.

40%

of Nominal Christian preteens say they never read the Bible.

Gen Alpha feels confident sharing their faith (82%), but doesn't feel as responsible to do so (64%).

Emerging

COMMITTED CHRISTIANS

Our previous research on Gen Z highlighted that many identify as Christians but may not actually be living out the beliefs and behaviors of Christ-followers. Being a Christian can mean different things depending on a person's background and environment. In response, OneHope defined a set of beliefs and behaviors that indicate a respondent is a Committed Christian. We discovered very low numbers of Committed Christians across our US and global research.

We imagined the same would likely be true of Gen Alpha and wanted to explore the Committed framework with preteens in mind. But it is also important to be aware that young people at this age are by no means set in their beliefs and behaviors. Developmentally, 11-13-year-olds often mirror the behaviors of their parents or main influences. Our data immediately reflected this, showing that 88% of the preteens who fit our committed construct also live with Christian parents.

We looked at six traits that indicate Gen Alpha is committed to their Christian faith—the same six we used for our Gen Z study. But for this report, we are calling these young people Emerging Committed Christians. This renaming reminds us that Gen Alpha's faith and spiritual practices are still evolving, and we don't know where they are headed in the future.

6 TRAITS OF AN EMERGING COMMITTED CHRISTIAN PRETEEN



Note that these teens self-identified as Christian but not as Jehovah's Witness or Mormon. Emerging Committed Christians may be Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, Orthodox, or several other denominations.

We found that one in six Gen Alphas, or 16% of the young people we surveyed, are Emerging Committed Christians. When we look only at Christian young people, we find that a quarter of Christians display the beliefs and behaviors of an Emerging Committed Christian. However, most Gen Alpha Christians are still nominal—missing one or more of the traits we consider key to commitment.

16%
OF GEN ALPHA
ARE EMERGING
COMMITTED
CHRISTIANS

MEET GEN ALPHA



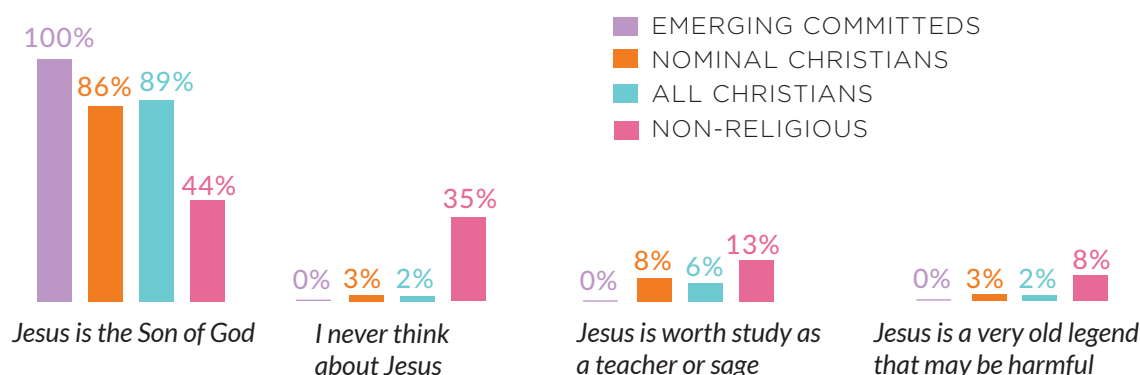
@_lharpergrace
Jesus_saves 📖
♥ my YG ♥

Meet **Harper**, a 13-year-old girl who is confident in her relationship with God. Even though she doesn't have answers to all her questions about life, she loves Jesus and boldly shares Bible verses with her friends and social media followers. She looks forward every week to her girl's small group at church and really looks up to her youth leader, who is college-age. Harper often asks her for advice and tries to follow it. She knows Jesus died for her sins, and when she messes up, she tries to tell him and ask for forgiveness. Harper is an example of an Emerging Committed Christian with a strong faith developing in her life.

Spiritual VIEWPOINTS

Let's look at key beliefs and behaviors that help us understand Gen Alpha's relationship with Christianity. Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is strong among Gen Alpha Christians, with almost nine in 10 affirming that statement. Interestingly, nearly half of the Nones also believe this. This is likely influenced by their family, as close to a third of Nones in our study report having Christian parents.

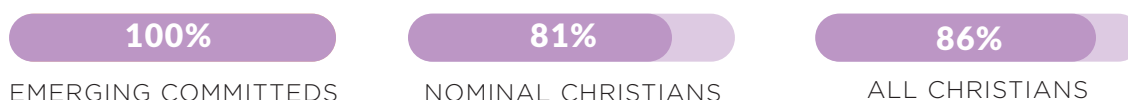
VIEW OF JESUS



In addition to their biblical view of Jesus, most Christian preteens recognize what he has done for them. 86% agree that forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

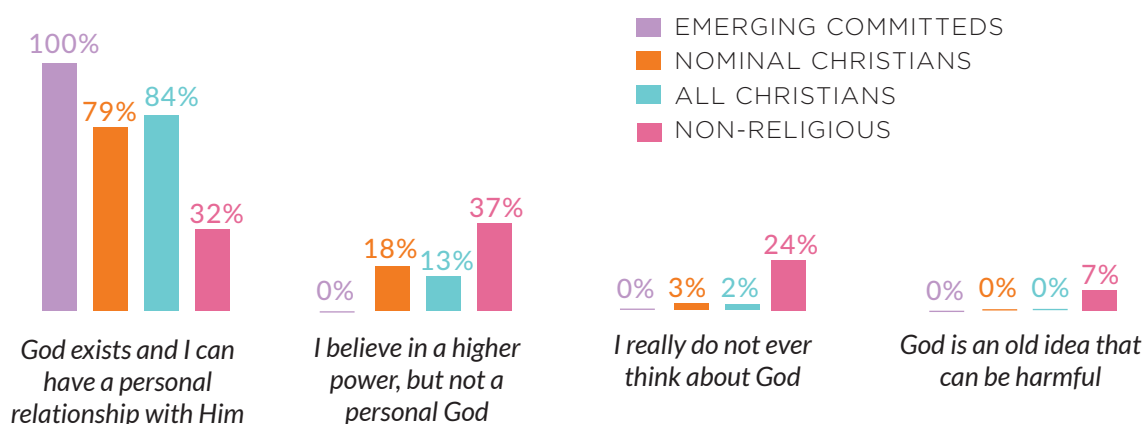
Forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ



Belief in God remains steadfast among Gen Alpha Christians, with 84% believing in his existence and the possibility of a personal relationship with him. However, 18% of Nominal Christians believe in a higher power but not a personal God. This shows the need to remind young people that God is not far off; he is present with us and wants to be actively involved in our daily lives.

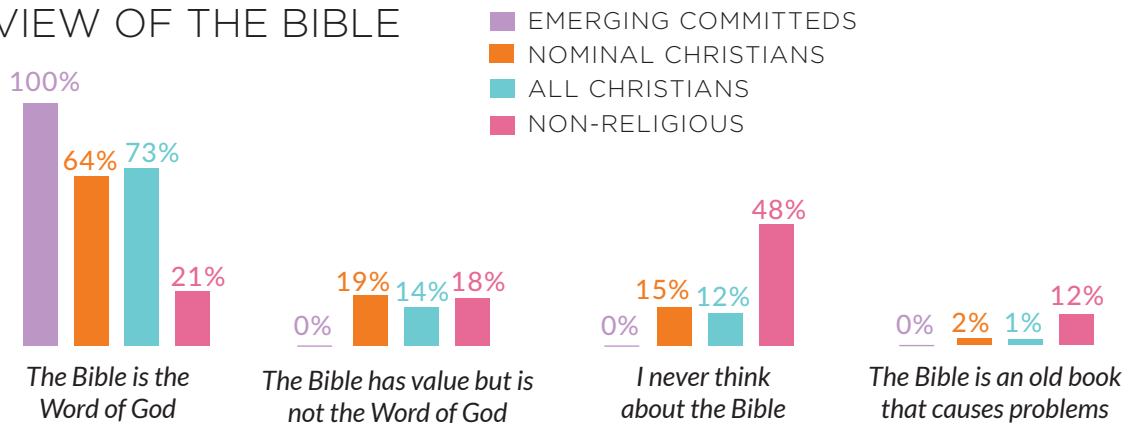
Interestingly, Nones are more spiritually curious than apathetic. Many say they believe in a higher power but have mixed views on the possibility of a personal God. This leaning towards spirituality may suggest a chance to connect with Nones by addressing their search for meaning in ways they can resonate with.

VIEW OF GOD



Of their core beliefs about Jesus, God, and the Bible, Christian preteens show the least commitment to the Bible. 73% of Christians say the Bible is the Word of God, with Nominals at 64%. Among Nones, apathy towards the Bible is more pronounced than hostility. Almost half say they never think about it, while only 12% say it's a problematic old book.

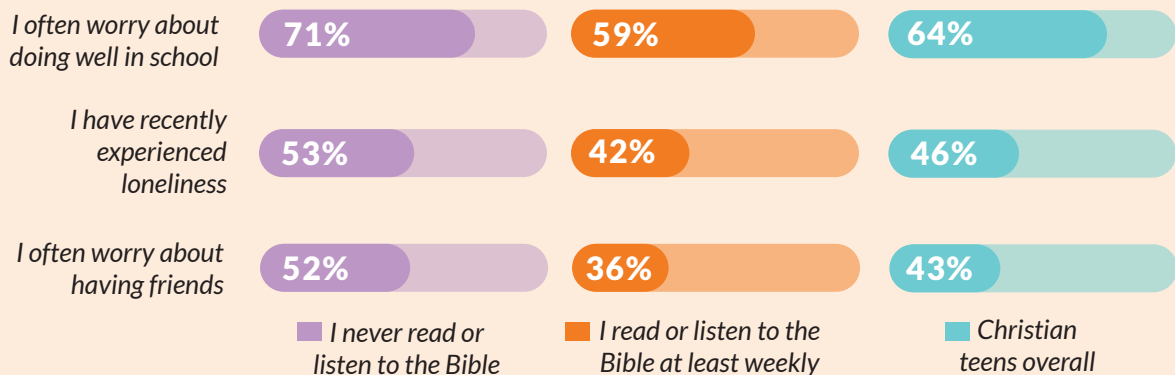
VIEW OF THE BIBLE



THE POWER OF THE WORD

There were clear connections showing that regular scripture engagement positively impacts young people's wellbeing. Christian preteens who read or listen to scripture weekly or more often are less likely to worry about social relationships and school. They are also less likely to experience loneliness compared to those who never interact with the Bible.

CHRISTIAN PRETEENS RESPOND

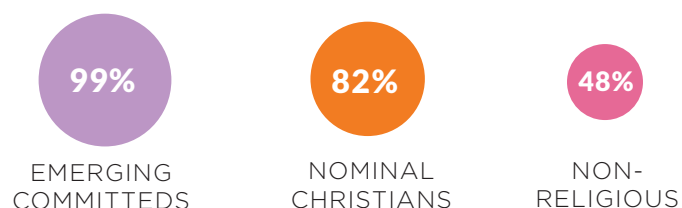


SPIRITUALLY Open

Many preteens in the United States resonate deeply with their spirituality. Overall, more than three in four Gen Alphas (76%) say their faith beliefs, religion, or spiritual journey are an important part of their identity. Nearly half (48%) of non-religious preteens also agree, showing a spiritual openness—regardless of their religious affiliation.

One group that identified most strongly with their faith, religion, or spiritual journey were Black respondents. Our data revealed that 89% of Black preteens agreed or strongly agreed that spirituality is a key part of their identity.

My faith beliefs, religion, or spiritual journey are an important part of my identity.



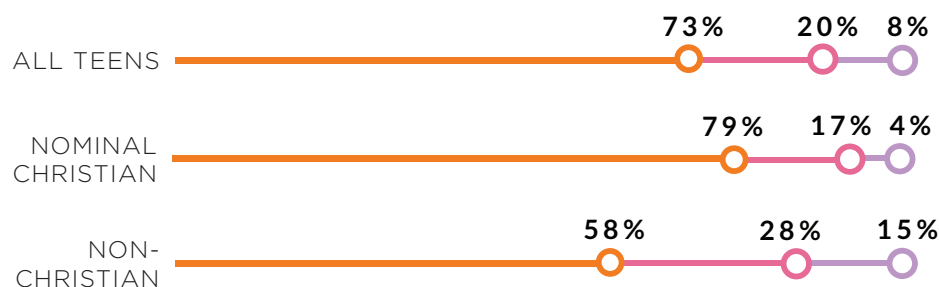
Preteens also say they would accept a friend's invitation to come to church. Almost three in four of those who do not already attend church say they would come if invited (73%). The rest say they are not sure, with only a few saying they would not come. This suggests that many preteens are seekers who are open to spiritual experiences wherever they may find them.

OPENNESS TO CHURCH



I would be open to attending a Christian church service if a friend invited me.

● YES ● NOT SURE ● NO

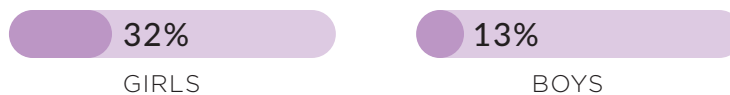


Gen Alpha

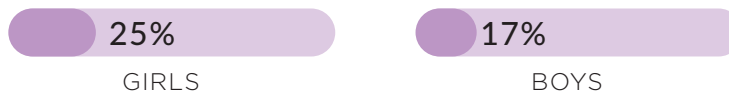
+ SPIRITUALISM

Although Gen Alpha's openness to spirituality may make them open to the Gospel, their openness extends far beyond Christian spaces – often without discernment about their origins or implications. Some Gen Alpha preteens are exploring various spiritual activities that can significantly shape their beliefs. One in five Christians and almost one in three non-Christians regularly engage in activities like astrology, crystal healing, and manifesting. Girls, in particular, are more likely than boys to participate in these practices. They are also more likely than boys to believe in a higher power and see value in the Bible. Though many are interested in spiritual experiences, their openness to these non-Christian practices underscores the need for discernment and guidance toward truth.

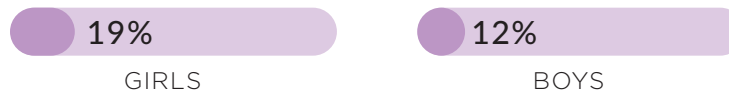
I regularly participate in spiritual activities like manifesting, crystal healing, ouija boards, saging/smudging, astrology/zodiac signs, or tarot cards:



I believe in a higher power, but not a personal God:

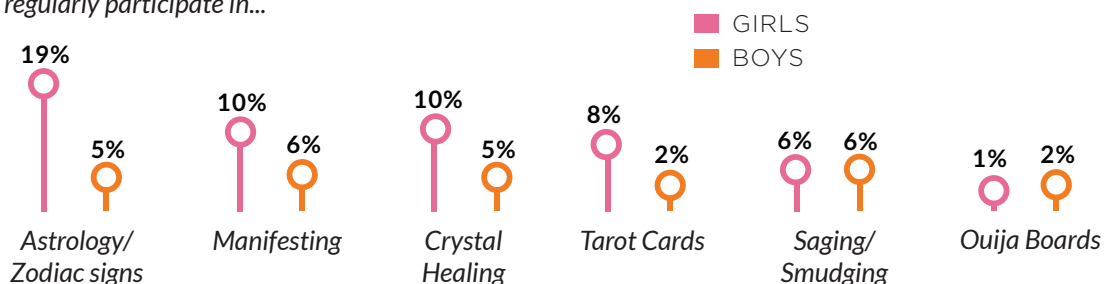


The Bible has value, but is not the Word of God:



ALTERNATIVE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

I regularly participate in...



I regularly participate in spiritual activities like manifesting, crystal healing, ouija boards, saging/smudging, astrology/zodiac signs, or tarot cards:

- All teens: 22%
- Christians: 20%
- Non-Christians: 27%

Faith

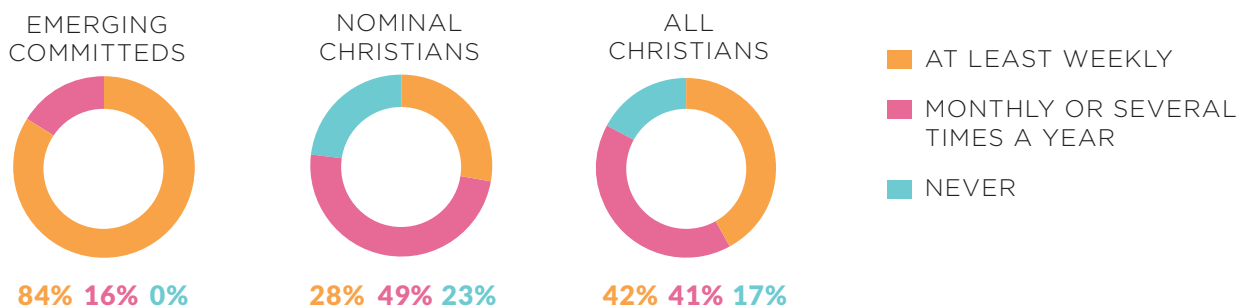
PRACTICES

In addition to their beliefs, we learned about this generation's religious practices by measuring habits like gathering with their faith community, reading scripture, praying, and having spiritual conversations.

We immediately saw that Emerging Committed Christians are making church attendance a regular part of their lives. Nominal Christians, on the other hand, show much less engagement. Almost one in four never attend church, and two in five never engage with the Bible on their own.

Despite this, it was encouraging to see that many nominals still maintain the habit of prayer. Just over half of them pray at least weekly on their own. Many also say they can point to a time when God answered one of their prayers.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE



THE POWER OF FAMILY

Remember, these preteens are not driving themselves to church. The choices of those around them, especially their parents, are crucial. The data showed that Gen Alpha Christians growing up with both biological parents are more likely to make it to church weekly compared to those in households with a single parent, blended families, or other family situations. A young person's home life can significantly affect their ability to engage with a faith community. Concrete support like offering a ride to church activities can make a big difference.

Attending church at least weekly:

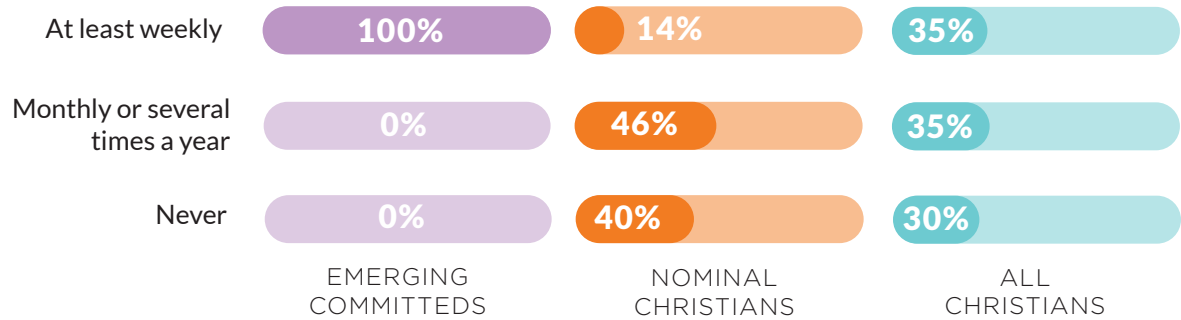
- Two Biological Parents: **45%**
- All Other Households:¹ **35%**

¹ Includes single-parent families, blended families, and other living situations.

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT



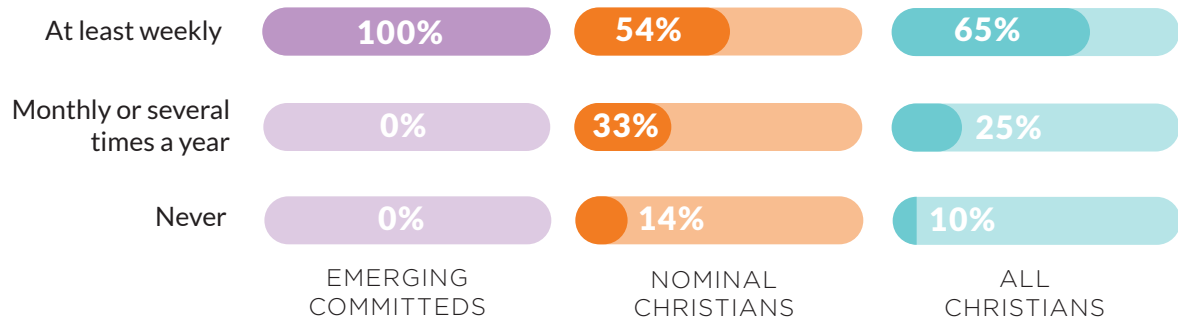
I read or listen to the Bible on my own



PRAYER

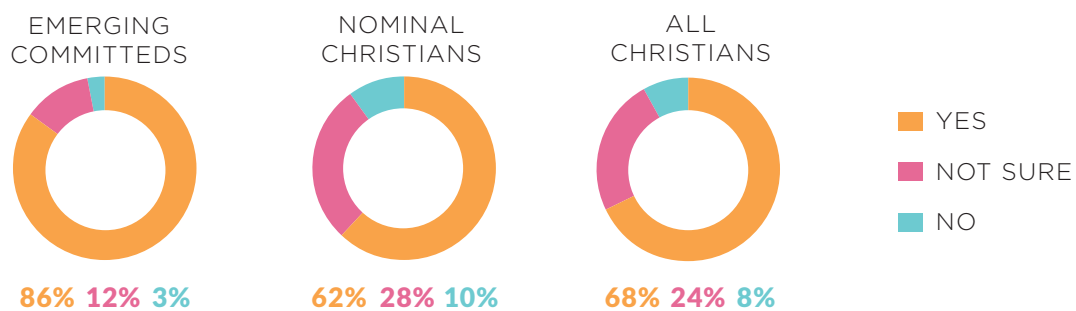


I pray on my own



ANSWERED PRAYER

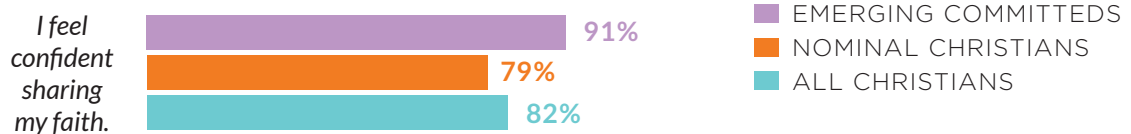
I can remember a time when God answered a prayer



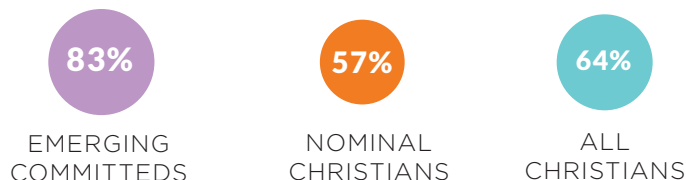
Sharing FAITH

Gen Alpha is comfortable sharing their faith, but doesn't feel a strong need to do so. While 82% feel confident sharing their faith, only 64% agree they are responsible to share it. Those who are sharing their faith with others primarily do so with family members. Emerging Committed Christians are more likely to feel both urgency and confidence, which makes sense as 83% say they have been taught how. Almost all of them share their faith with their family, and around seven in ten share with their friends. Only 1% say they keep their faith to themselves.

SHARING FAITH

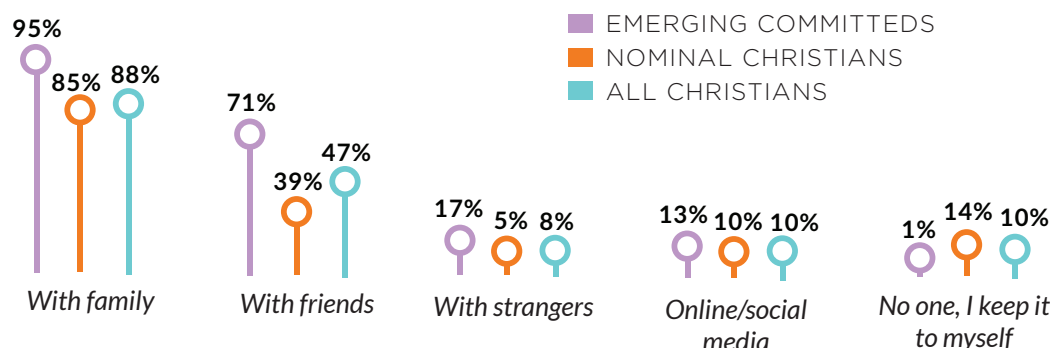


I have been taught to share my faith with others.



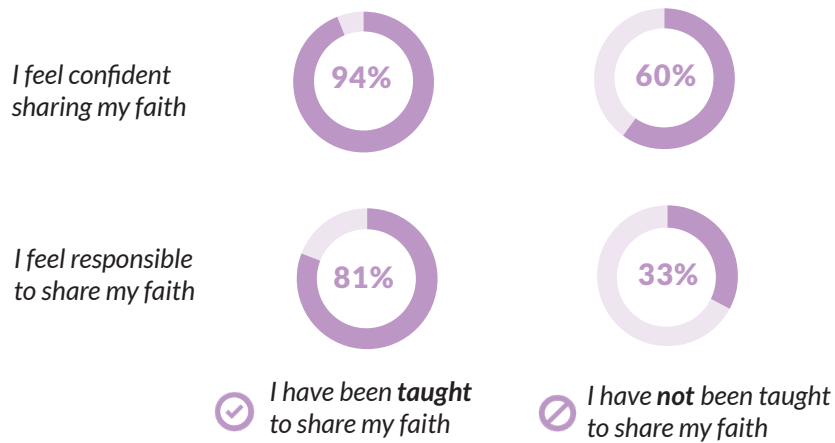
HOW OR WITH WHOM DO YOU SHARE YOUR FAITH?

Select all that apply:

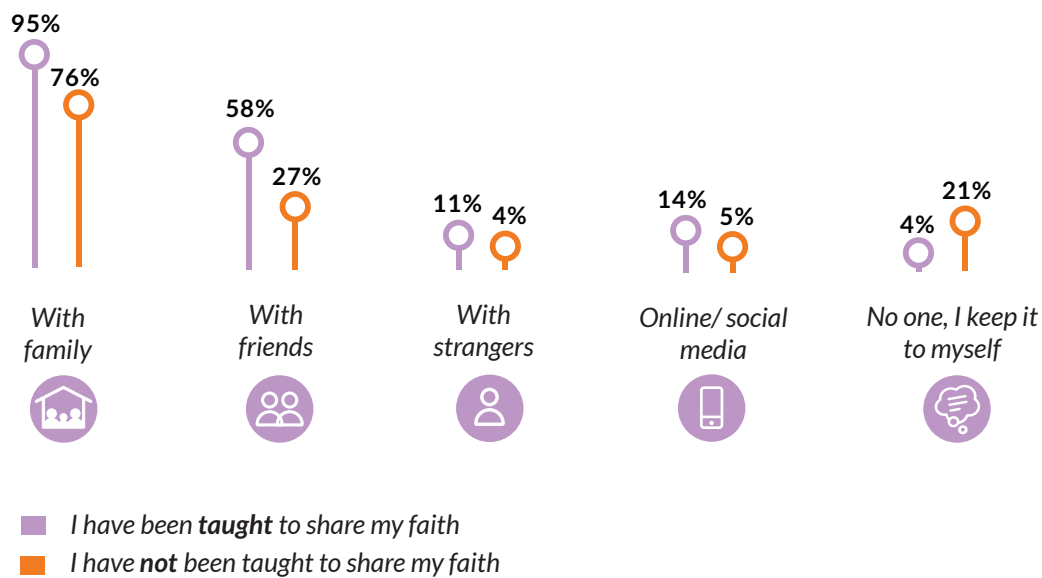


One reason for these gaps could be a lack of guidance. Young people who have been taught how to share their faith feel more responsible, confident, and are more likely to talk about their beliefs in all their relationships.

CHRISTIAN GEN ALPHAS



I SHARE MY FAITH...



CONCLUSION



Remember, Gen Alpha is still young so we don't know what the future holds for them and how their faith will develop. A lot can happen in the teenage years that either draws young people closer to God, or may push them away from the church and a relationship with Jesus. But for now, this data gives us an idea of the trajectory they are on.

- **BELIEF VS. ENGAGEMENT**

Belief in Jesus as the Son of God remains strong among Gen Alpha Christians, as does the idea of a personal relationship with God. But preteens are less interested in the Bible and reading it for themselves. Only around one in three engage with it weekly or daily. We know that studying God's Word is central to developing a robust faith that can stand up to the complexities of life and its challenges. How can we help young people see the Bible as the Word of God and a valuable resource for their lives?

- **THE NEED FOR DISCIPLESHIP**

One in six preteens we talked to display the beliefs and habits that show they are committing to their faith. This includes foundational truths such as looking to Jesus for salvation, regular scripture reading, and prayer. Although they are young, we must take their discipleship seriously and support their deepening faith journeys. How can we support them in growing their faith and building resilience for the challenging teenage years ahead?

- **THE ROLE OF CHURCH**

Faith communities play a pivotal role in discipleship. Emerging Committeds are much more likely than Nominal Christians to regularly attend church, which means that church leaders have the opportunity to play a crucial role both in bringing young people to Christ and showing them what it means to commit to him in their daily lives.

- **SPIRITUAL OPENNESS**

Research has been pointing to a spiritual openness among young people that is also apparent in these research results. Preteens affirm that religion or spirituality is an important part of their identity. Even non-religious young people care about spirituality in some form. This is both an encouraging opportunity as well as a potential source of vulnerability. There is plenty for young people to find to try to fill that void. How can we present Jesus to this generation to meet them at their point of need and love them the rest of their lives without fail?

- **CONFIDENT VS. EQUIPPED**

Preteens show confidence about sharing their faith, but many don't feel responsible to do so. Notably, many have never been taught how to do this. It is difficult to put into practice something you have never been shown how to do. Young people can be incredible ambassadors for Christ who share what they believe with enthusiasm and joy. But they need help and encouragement to be able to do this. How can we raise up a witness among this generation that shines the light of Christ into this dark world?

Family + Influencers

MEET GEN ALPHA

Noah is 12 and lives with his mom and stepdad.

His family is not religious, and he usually asks his mom for advice. “Do what makes you happy,” she tells him. But figuring out what makes him happy isn’t easy! At school, some of his classmates have been talking about gender fluidity and how they’d be so much happier

if they could be called by a different pronoun. Lately Noah’s started to wonder about his own identity and where he fits in the world. He knows that even if he changes things up, his friends will still accept him because they want him to be happy.



@!noah_12
he/him/his



Emma is a 12-year-old girl who lives with her dad.

Her dad has been a Christian for as long as she can remember. Watching him pray and study the Bible every morning has inspired her to develop her own relationship with Jesus. She admires her dad a lot and thinks he can do anything and knows everything. She’s not afraid to ask him questions like: “Why do bad things happen? Does God make natural disasters? What will happen to my friends if they don’t believe in Jesus?” He’s always patient with her, even if he doesn’t know the answer, and often points her back to the Bible to look at what God has to say.



@!em_loves_jesus
Isaiah 41:10



WHAT WE DISCOVERED

95%

of preteens say their family experience has been good overall.

Gen Alpha is growing up in many different types of households. Only half live in a household with both of their biological parents.

Preteens say parents are their most important influence when it comes to some of life’s most important questions.

When preteens have questions about faith, they are twice as likely to ask their moms rather than their dads.

91%

of Gen Alpha say they have friends they can be their real selves with.

Friend + Family

RELATIONSHIPS

We wanted to find out about the people surrounding Gen Alpha and how they feel about those relationships. Overall, young people report positive relationships. 91% say they have an adult—besides their parent or caregiver—who they can turn to if they're in trouble. The same number also feel they have friends they can be themselves with. We know from other research that authentic relationships are key to young people being able to thrive, so it's encouraging to see that Gen Alpha has these relationships in place.

I have an adult in my life who I can go to if I am in trouble (other than my parent/caregiver).

94%

GIRLS

89%

BOYS

93%

CHRISTIANS

88%

NON-CHRISTIANS

97%

EMERGING
COMMITTEDS

92%

NOMINAL
CHRISTIANS

Gen Alpha is being born into families that are increasingly diverse and non-traditional.¹ This research showed that only half of preteens live with both biological parents. Many are being raised by a single parent or in blended families. However, regardless of their living situation, Gen Alpha made it clear that they are happy in their family life. Almost all preteens surveyed say their family experience has been good overall. The number remained high across all types of households.

HOUSEHOLD

I live with:

- Two biological parents: 50%
- Single-parent family: 31%
- Blended family: 17%
- Other living situations: 2%



95%

OF PRETEENS
SAY THEIR FAMILY
EXPERIENCE HAS
BEEN GOOD

FAMILY SATISFACTION

My family experience has been good overall.

TWO BIOLOGICAL PARENTS 97%

ALL OTHERS 92%

¹ Pew Research identified that only 46% of U.S. children younger than 18 years old were living with both biological parents, while the remaining 53% lived with remarried parents, a single unmarried parent, or two cohabiting parents. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2014/12/22/less-than-half-of-u-s-kids-today-live-in-a-traditional-family/>

It was also encouraging to see that Gen Alpha reports being close to their parents. Nearly three in four preteens say they feel comfortable being honest with their parents about what is going on in their life. Boys and girls were equally likely to say this.

THE POWER OF CLOSENESS

It can be overwhelming to think about raising children in this world. We want them to be safe, healthy, feel loved, thrive in their identity and purpose, make good decisions, and—of course—follow Jesus. How do we accomplish all of this? It feels like there are no guarantees for parenting outcomes in this world that is more complex by the day. But this is not a new problem. Research tracking families across four generations has identified three critical factors in parents who successfully pass a family's faith to the next generation.¹ And they're pretty straightforward!

Warm Relationships: Cultivating closeness in shared, safe spaces.

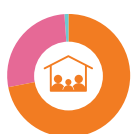
Open Conversations: Courage to create space to hear and be heard.

Authentic Modeling: Walking with Jesus and inviting children to walk with you.

Parent-child relationships that showed this kind of closeness were significantly more likely to pass on their faith practices and beliefs to the next generation. So take heart! By pursuing these three things, you can help give children the best chance of embracing the hope of the Gospel for their own lives.

FAMILY CONVERSATIONS

I feel like I can be honest with my parents about what is going on in my life.

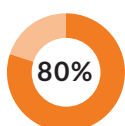


- **Often: 72%**
- **Sometimes: 27%**
- **Rarely or Never: 1%**

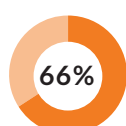
Unsurprisingly perhaps, a preteen's home life made a big difference in whether they felt comfortable to share honestly with their parents. Young people being raised by both biological parents had the highest trust as compared to other household types. Technology usage also appears to be connected to this topic. Preteens who spend more time online daily are less likely to feel they can be honest with their parents.

I often feel like I can be honest with my parents.

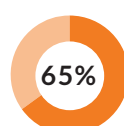
By household:



TWO BIOLOGICAL
PARENTS



SINGLE
PARENTS



BLENDED
FAMILIES

¹ Vern Bengtson, Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations.

I often feel like I can be honest with my parents.

By time spent online:

- Low (0-2.9 hours online daily): **76%**
- Medium (3-4.9 hours online daily): **73%**
- High (5+ hours online daily): **65%**

The majority of preteens say they feel comfortable asking their family about faith when they have questions.

In my family, I feel comfortable asking any questions about faith.

- Yes: **70%**
- Sometimes: **22%**
- Not Really: **8%**

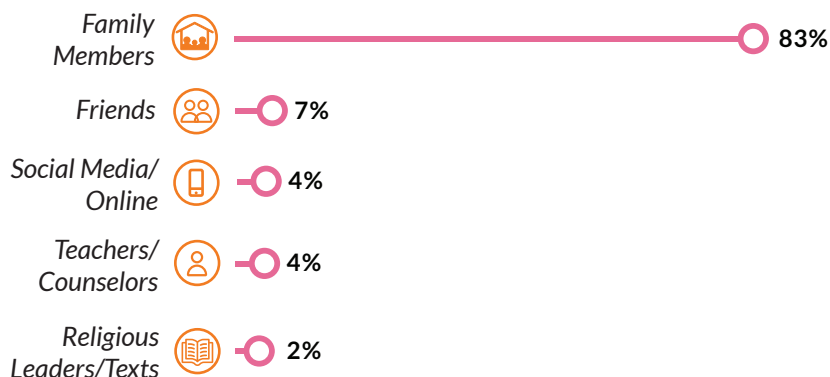
Who Gen Alpha LISTENS TO

Gen Alpha is at an age where family is highly influential for them. Preteens say they turn to their family members more than any other source for advice. We specifically asked them about important concrete topics like right and wrong, religion and God, and gender and sexuality. We wanted to know where they go with their questions about these concepts.

When it comes to questions about right and wrong, the overwhelming majority of Gen Alpha take their questions straight to family members. Comparatively few preteens say they go most often to friends, the internet, teachers, or religious leaders. We saw that Emerging Committed preteens are more likely than their peers to approach their pastors for conversations about right and wrong, but no more likely than Nominal Christians to open conversations about gender or sexuality.

RIGHT AND WRONG CONVERSATIONS

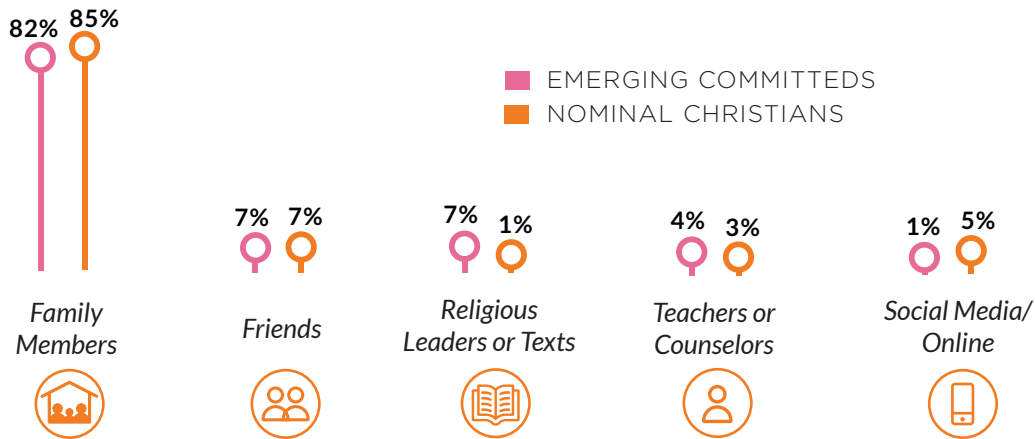
*Where do you go most often for information or guidance about **right and wrong**?¹*



¹ Although offline media (books, magazines, television, radio, or newspaper) was included as an option in the survey, it was selected by less than 1% of respondents, reflecting its minimal influence on this topic.

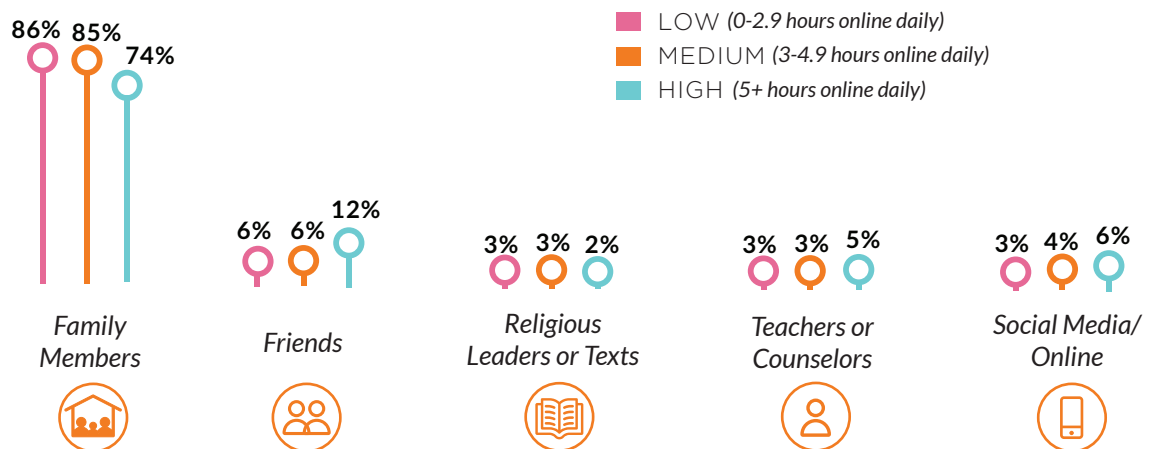
QUESTIONS ABOUT RIGHT AND WRONG

Where do you go most often for information or guidance about right and wrong?



While family is clearly the main influencer for Gen Alpha, there was at least one interesting trend in the data. Preteens who spend more time online are less likely to turn to family for advice and instead choose other sources like friends. While these numbers are relatively low overall, they do show a pattern that is worth watching as this generation grows.

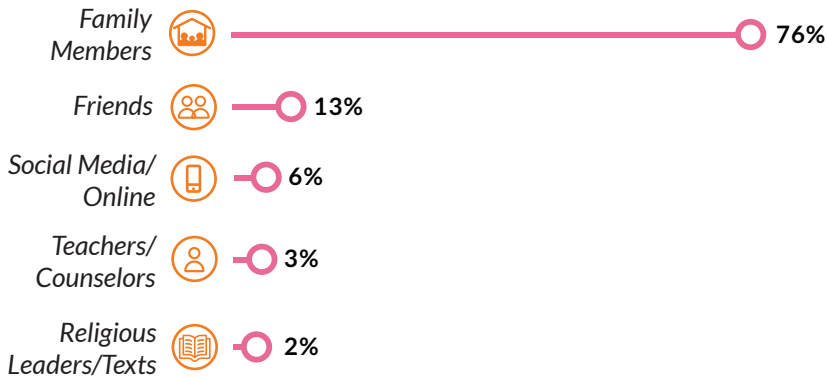
By time spent online



Regarding gender and sexuality, family was once again Gen Alpha's top choice for advice—although friends are also an influence. Once again, preteens who spend more time online are more likely to turn to friends or social media for input.

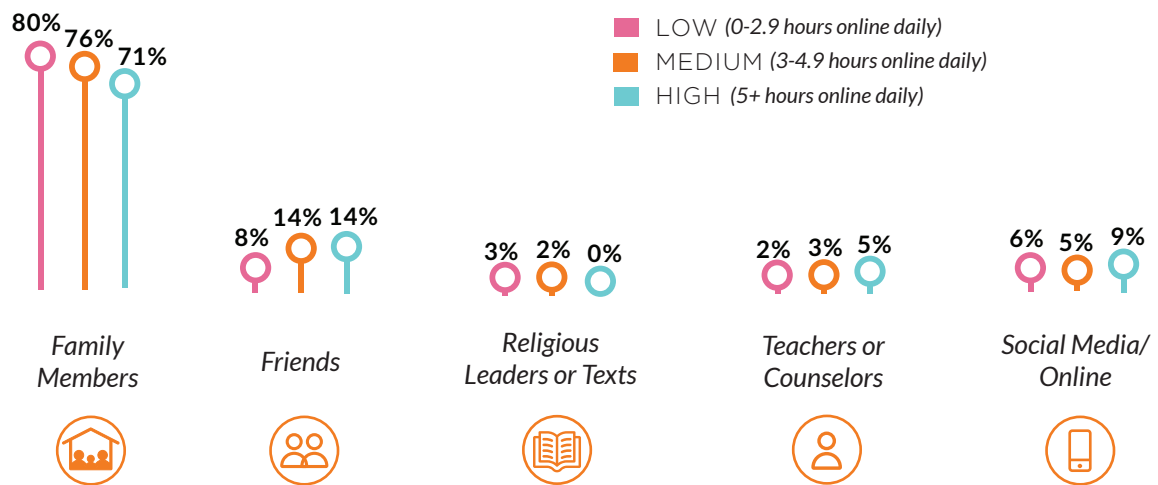
GENDER AND SEXUALITY CONVERSATIONS

Where do you go most often for information or guidance about gender and sexuality?¹



QUESTIONS ABOUT GENDER AND SEXUALITY

By time spent online:



¹ Although offline media (books, magazines, television, radio, or newspaper) was included as an option in the survey, it was selected by less than 1% of respondents, reflecting its minimal influence on this topic.

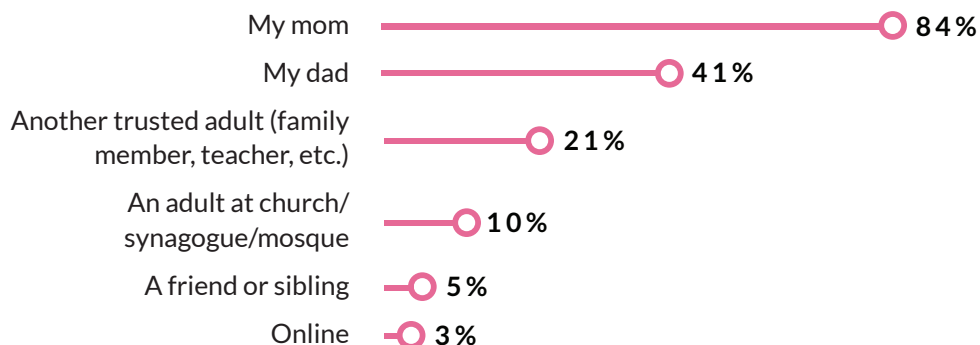
Faith

INFLUENCES

We asked Gen Alpha who they turn to for questions about religion or God. Parents topped the list—specifically moms. Overall, preteens are twice as likely to go to their mom with questions about faith rather than their dad. However, dads were seen to be a bigger influence on sons and preteens who reported living with both biological parents. It is encouraging to see present fathers in the lives of Gen Alpha, given other research that shows the importance of fathers on the faith journeys of young people.¹ Perhaps most encouraging is that almost all of Gen Alpha says they have someone to turn to for questions about religion or God.

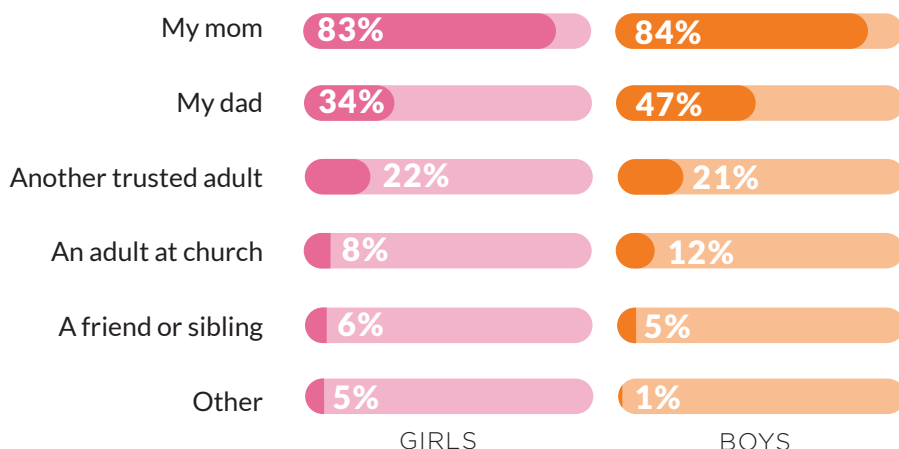
RELIGIOUS CONVERSATIONS

When I have questions about religion or God, I usually ask (select up to two)



QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD

When I have questions about religion or God, I usually ask (select up to two)²



¹ For more on this topic, consider Vern Bengtson's book *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations* as well as Nancy Pearcey's *The Toxic War on Masculinity: How Christianity Reconciles the Sexes*.

² Respondents were able to select 'I don't have anyone to ask.' 1% selected this so it is not included in the overall breakdown.

PARENTS TAKE HEART

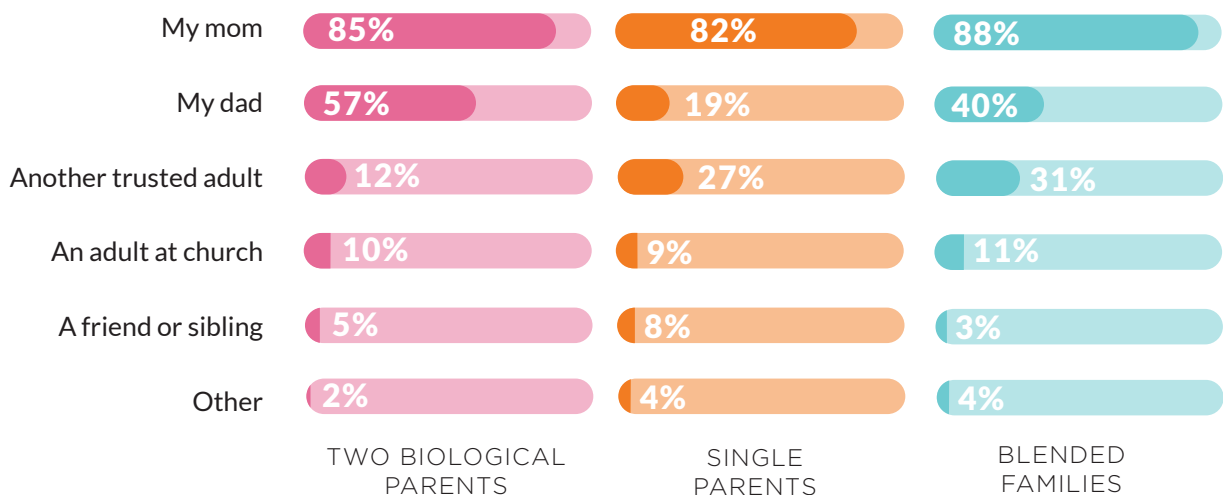
At this age, family is key for Gen Alpha. We can clearly see the influence of parents across every topic we asked about. Moms and dads are the first stop for preteens when they have questions. These conversations might start at home, in the car, or at bedtime—children are curious! From there, these questions ripple outward to other adults, teachers, siblings, friends, and online sources.

While it might seem like church or pastors don't rank very high on Gen Alpha's influence list, know that they are present. Especially for Emerging Committeds, who were twice as likely as nominals to turn to an adult at church about religious questions. But overall, family comes first and is the important primary guide in children's lives. Parents should take heart that their voice matters in the lives of their children.

A preteen's home life was seen to have a big effect on who they turn to for advice. While moms remained a primary influence across the board, dads were also sought out by preteens who live with both biological parents. Young people who are not living with both of their parents are more likely to rely on other trusted adults for faith guidance.

QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD

When I have questions about religion or God, I usually ask (select up to two)

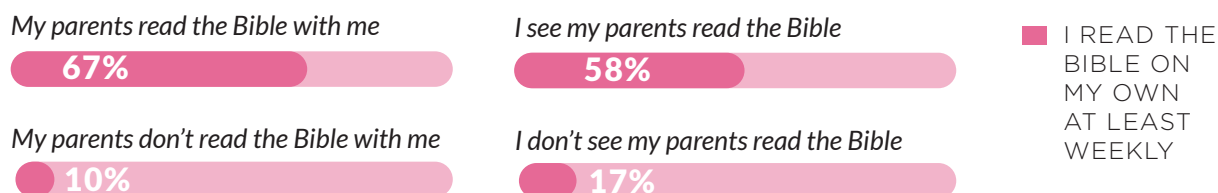


Who Gen Alpha IMITATES

Talking about faith is one thing, but modeling it is even more powerful. We wanted to explore the examples parents are setting for their children and how that is affecting Gen Alpha's habits and perspective. Perhaps unsurprisingly, preteens are reflecting their parents' faith practices in their own lives. We saw this pattern play across several categories including Bible reading, prayer, church attendance, and sharing their faith.

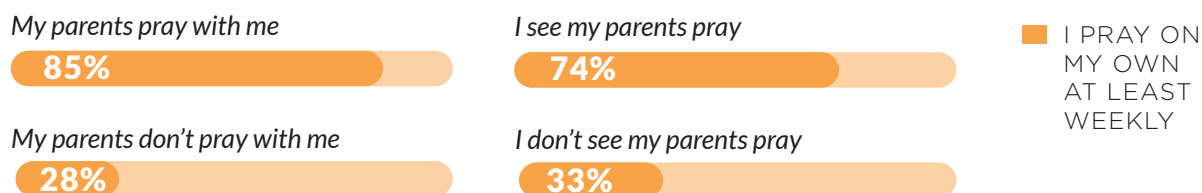
BIBLE READING

Christian preteens who read the Bible with their parents (or who see their parents reading the Bible) are far more likely to read scripture on their own. Preteens are much more likely to read the Bible on their own if their parents read scripture with them or if they see their parents reading the Bible regularly.



PRAYER

Preteens who pray with their parents (or who see their parents praying) are far more likely to pray on their own.

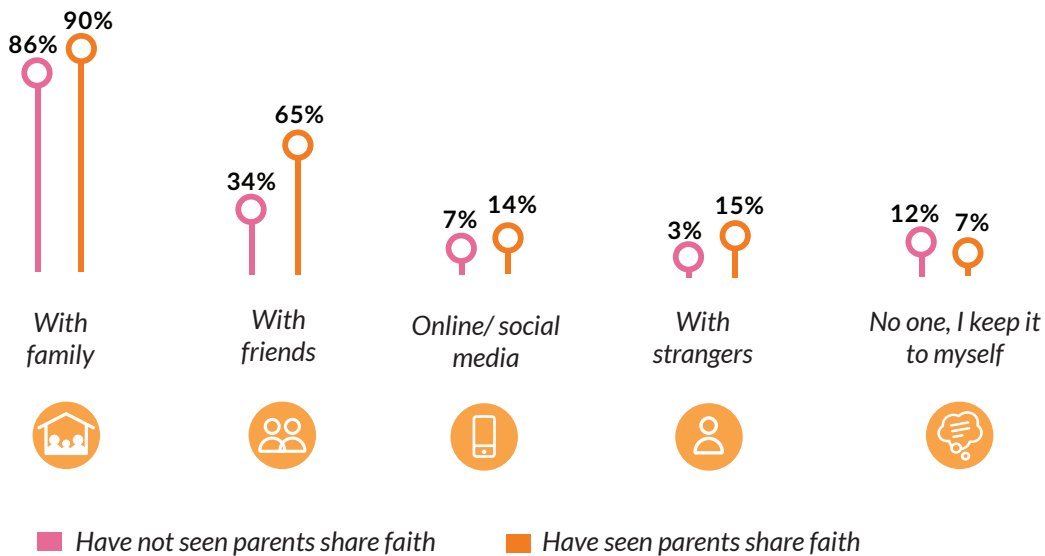


SHARING THEIR FAITH

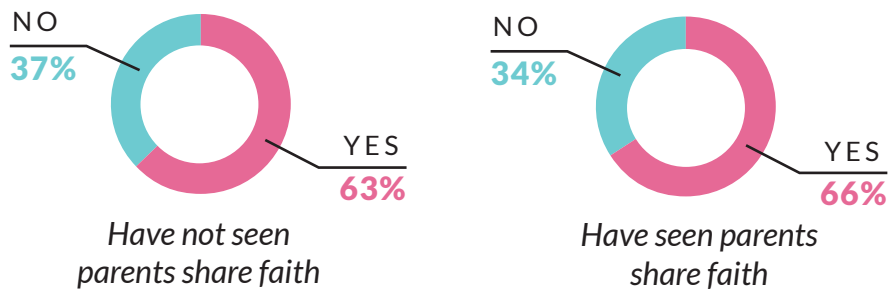
No matter what your age, sharing faith can be intimidating. We wanted to understand the role parents are playing in helping young people do this. Interestingly, we found that having parents who share their faith did not impact how responsible or confident preteens felt about talking about their own beliefs. Where parents did make a big impact was in whether preteens actually did share. Preteens were more likely to share their faith with friends, online, and even with strangers if they had seen their parents modeling that behavior.

SHARING FAITH

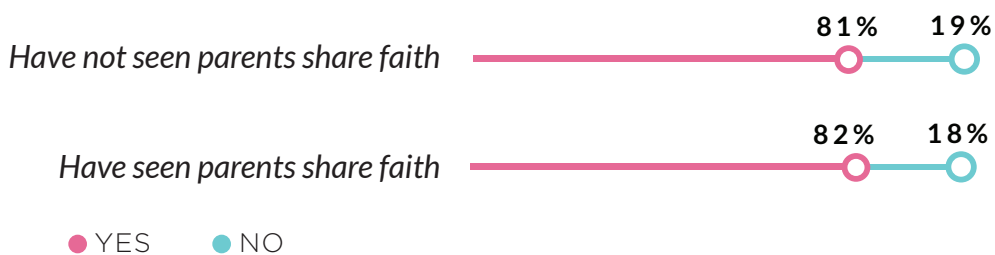
How or with whom do you share your faith? (select all that apply)



I FEEL RESPONSIBLE TO SHARE MY FAITH



I FEEL CONFIDENT SHARING MY FAITH



CONCLUSION



Today's young people face complex issues and questions. In the chaos of information and noise, the voices they listen to are critical. The people they trust and turn to will have a big impact on what they believe and how they will act.

- **STRONG SUPPORT NETWORKS**

Encouragingly, Gen Alpha reports many positive relationships. Most preteens say they have friends that they can be genuine with. Many also have at least one adult other than their parents that they can go to if they are in trouble. This is good news! Supportive connections are critical as preteens get older and increasingly look beyond their parents for information and advice. How can we establish strong, trusted relationships that will see them through future challenges?

- **EVOLVING FAMILY STRUCTURES**

Gen Alpha is growing up in a time where families look less and less like those of previous generations. Many preteens are being raised in blended families, single-parent households, and households that include extended family. We cannot assume all families look the same as we minister to Gen Alpha. We must try to see each family and their different, unique situations. How can we make sure that all the adults who are investing in our young people are equipped and encouraged to help young people flourish?

- **FAMILY AS A FOUNDATION**

Preteens report that parents are a primary influence in their lives, and they trust their family as guides for life's most important questions. Family members and caregivers should not take lightly the privilege they have of speaking into their children's lives, especially while they are young and looking to listen. How can we support parents and other family members to step into their important role of discipling this generation starting at home?

- **CHURCH REMAINS IMPORTANT**

Although parents are young people's primary influence, the Church continues to play a key role. We found that 84% of Emerging Committed Christians attend church at least weekly. So, although young people are going to parents first, their connection to a church community would appear to play a critical role in building their commitment to faith. And that doesn't even take into account the Church's influence on Gen Alpha's parents who have the opportunity to model faith at home. How can we strengthen the bond between church and home and build an active partnership between parents and the church?

- **LIVE BY EXAMPLE**

It's no secret that actions speak louder than words. Preteens not only listen to their parents but also watch what they do. For Gen Alpha, having parents who live out their Christian faith is crucial to their own spiritual journey. Perhaps the best thing parents can do is to grow in their own faith and model it transparently for their children. How can we encourage parents in foundational spiritual disciplines like reading the Bible, praying, and discussing their faith so that Gen Alpha comes to see these as natural parts of the Christian life?

Their Digital Lives

MEET GEN ALPHA

Meet **Elijah**.

He's 13 years old and goes to church with his mom and grandma every Sunday. He's tried to sneak his handheld gaming device into service, but Grandma caught him right away. He spends almost all of his free time gaming online, plus he's on the Internet every day for virtual school. So he's basically in front of a device every minute except when he sleeps and eats. His mom worries about his screen time, but it's just a way of life. He has to do school and how else will he stay connected to his friends if he doesn't game? Adults need to stop complaining and get with the times. He's heard about a church in Minecraft run by some celebrities, so maybe he won't even have to leave his house on Sundays pretty soon.



@llebron_ 🎮
2KALLDAY 🏀
🎮

Sophia is as comfortable in the digital space as she is IRL (in real life). She is 11 years old and spends her free time watching YouTube and TikTok. Her older sister has gotten into the world of GRWM (get-ready-with-me) make-up tutorials and has a decent following. Sophia wants to do it too, and start to build her influence as soon as she can. She's already been "borrowing" her sister's makeup to practice and copying techniques from girls who are really successful online. It looks fun to have so many people paying attention to you and commenting on your videos. The only frustrating thing is that her parents try to limit her screen time, and since she's only 11, she has to lie about her age to make her own social media accounts. But everyone else does it, so it's ok.



@lsoph_irl 🍷
grwm for school!!! ❤️
👧 ❤️

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

US preteens report they are averaging 4 hours online daily outside of schoolwork.

Nearly **1 in 5** preteens are high internet users, spending almost 8 hours online daily outside of schoolwork.

Half of preteens surveyed say they feel good about the amount of time they spend on a screen. 40% say they would be on screens more if they could.

Gen Alpha checks their social media daily in addition to spending time chatting and gaming.

Over **50%** of 11 and 12-year-olds list TikTok as their top platform, even though they are technically too young to have an account. Nearly a third say they are on Snapchat.

Preteens

+ SCREENS


We can't talk about Gen Alpha without talking about tech. Researchers have been tracking Gen Alpha's tech use basically from birth. One study showed that children from birth to age eight use about two and a half hours of screen media daily.¹ The same research organization also found that over half of Gen Alpha ages 8 to 12 own a tablet (57%) and that 43% own a smartphone.² Device ownership is becoming increasingly standard at younger and younger ages.

Along with having their own devices, Gen Alpha is also opening their own accounts. A recent study showed that 68% of 11-12 year olds use social media apps, even though the minimum age requirement for these platforms is 13.³ Our own research confirmed that Gen Alpha is active on social media and apparently has no issue with adjusting their birthdate to get access.

We asked young people to tell us how many hours they usually spend online daily outside of schoolwork. Gen Alpha told us they spend, on average, 4 hours and 6 minutes online daily.⁴ Time online was not different based on age (11-13), gender, or religion.

TIME SPENT ONLINE

During a typical day, how many hours do you spend online outside of schoolwork?

 **4 hours 6 minutes**

At first glance, this number may seem small, but putting it in perspective shows this is really a lot in a preteen's daily routine.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF GEN ALPHA

Let's break down a typical day for Gen Alpha as we follow Sophia, our 11-year-old aspiring influencer.

It's 2:45 pm—finally school is over! After the eternal wait for mom to get through the car line, Sophia is finally in the backseat on the way home. It's about a 20 minute ride, so there's plenty of time to scroll through TikTok videos and catch up on group texts recapping the day at school from everyone's different perspective.

¹ Common Sense Census 2020

² Common Sense Census 2021

³ Constant Companion 2023

⁴ Preteens were specifically asked to exclude time spent online for school purposes. Note that this question was different from a similar one asked in our previous research study. In GYC, teens could include time spent online doing schoolwork. We chose to reword this question for Gen Alpha because the increase of tech usage in schools today might artificially increase their daily estimates.

Sophia and her sister absently answer a few questions about school, but her mom is distracted too answering work texts and delaying a meeting until she gets home.

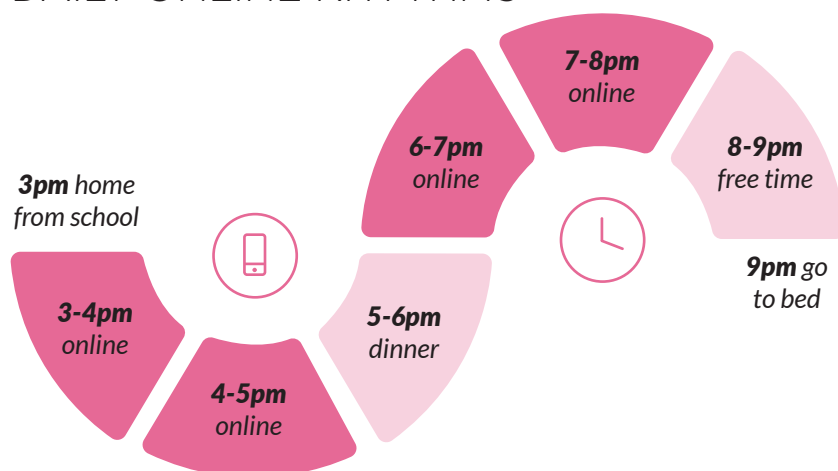
The phone is still in Sophia's hand as she piles out of the car and heads inside for a snack, watching YouTube videos at the counter while her mom returns to her laptop to wrap up her work day. After her snack, Sophia heads upstairs to practice some makeup techniques she saw on a channel she follows. Her older sister is livestreaming fashion advice from the bedroom next door and she can faintly hear her answering questions from her followers. After makeup practice, Sophia models some new outfits of her own and snaps photos to text to her friends for input. YouTube videos have been running in the background practically the whole time, so she has to plug her phone in to charge before dinner. It's tough leaving it upstairs while she eats, but family policy is no phones at the dinner table.

The phone is fully charged when she's back in about an hour. She has homework to do, but she stops every few minutes to scroll social media. It helps her take breaks and refocus. Plus the group chat has been blowing up about how stupid these assignments are. Around 8:30, her mom notifies her via Alexa that it's time to get ready for bed. She watches some videos while brushing her teeth and hides her phone under her pillow when her mom comes to tuck her in at 9:00. It's only little chunks, but all in all, her screen time report shows she spent four of her six free hours that day on her phone.



Individual habits vary, of course, as do family cultures. Not every 11-year-old has their own phone, but Sophia's daily routine is a pretty fair summary for a lot of Gen Alpha. While not specifically measured in the research, a day in their life could look something like this:

DAILY ONLINE RHYTHMS

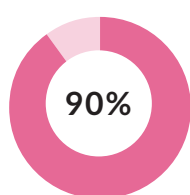


Online ACTIVITIES

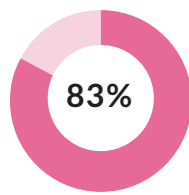
So what exactly is Gen Alpha doing on their phones all day? Besides watching video content, preteens say their number one online activity is gaming, followed by talking, messaging, or video chatting.¹ Boys are more likely to spend time gaming, and girls are more likely to spend time on social media. Even though 11 and 12-year-olds are not supposed to have social media accounts, many of them seem to have them or at least can access them through someone else.

ONLINE ACTIVITIES

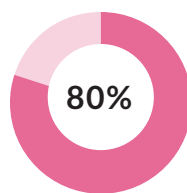
I do this every day...



GAMING
1 hour 38 minutes



CHATTING
1 hour 16 minutes



SOCIAL MEDIA
1 hour 14 minutes

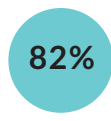


GAMING

I do this every day...



BOYS
2 hours 12 minutes



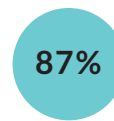
GIRLS
1 hour 6 minutes

SOCIAL MEDIA

I do this every day



BOYS
1 hour



GIRLS
1 hour 24 minutes

SOCIAL MEDIA

I do this every day...



¹ Please note that we did not specifically ask about the amount of time spent watching video content, since videos are so integrated into online activities.

CHATTING

I do this every day...



Social MEDIA USAGE

Four out of five preteens use social media daily, mainly YouTube and TikTok. This is a big number, especially considering that most platforms require users to be 13 or older. Our research showed that over 50% of 11 and 12-year-olds list TikTok as their top platform, and nearly a third choose Snapchat. Many preteens apparently have no problem adjusting their birthdate to get access. Instagram usage is the lowest among Gen Alpha but becomes more popular as preteens get older.

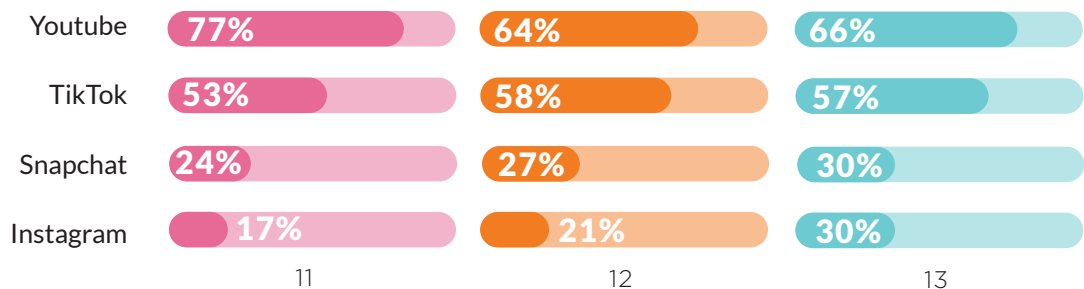
WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DO YOU USE THE MOST?

Select up to two



MOST USED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BY AGE

Select up to two



MEET GEN ALPHA



Maria is 12 years old and just dedicated her life to Jesus. Following Jesus has given her a peace and contentment she didn't have before. She doesn't get jealous of her friends on social media anymore or get depressed if she sees a photo of something she was left out of. She also finds that she's happy with how much time she spends online and doesn't need to scroll for hours to distract herself. At night, she prays herself to sleep now instead of watching online videos. She's even found a few Christian streamers to follow on Twitch. She's noticed they are different in the way they talk, and she's curious how she should share her new faith online.

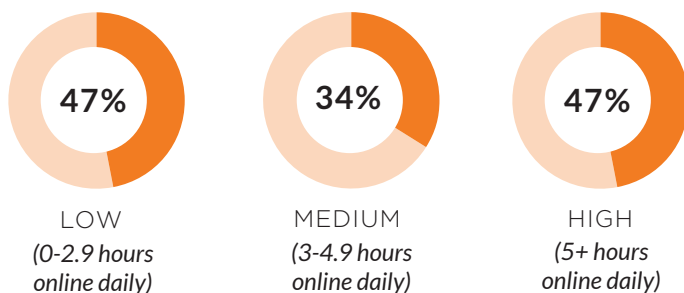
When asked how they felt about their screen time, half of preteens are satisfied, saying they feel good about it. A large number (40%) indicated a desire for more screen time, and only one in 10 acknowledged feeling like they spend too much time on screens. Interestingly, the desire for more screen time was split evenly across both low and high internet users. This indicates that the appetite for more is not necessarily the result of being restricted in their usage.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR SCREEN TIME?



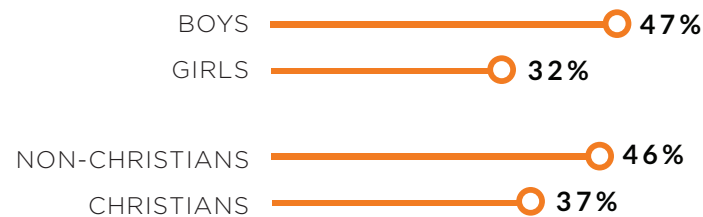
I WOULD BE ON A SCREEN MORE IF I COULD

By time spent online



While you might expect digital usage to be highly individual, the research showed trends by gender, religion, and ethnicity. Boys are significantly more likely than girls to want more screen time, as well as non-Christians as compared to Christians. Black preteens are the least likely to report being on a screen too much, but interestingly they report spending the most time online compared to their peers (averaging 5 hours and 12 minutes).

I WOULD BE ON A SCREEN MORE IF I COULD



I'M ON A SCREEN TOO MUCH



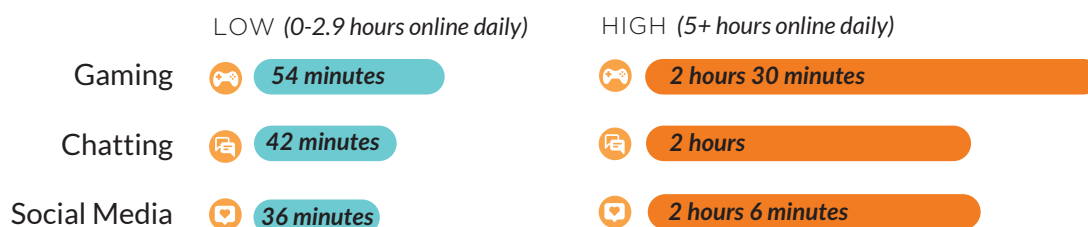
The Internet's INFLUENCE

We received a wide variety of responses from preteens about how much time they spend online. To help make sense of the differences, we categorized them into low (less than 3 hours online daily), medium (3-4.9 hours daily), and high (5+ hours daily). Nearly one in five teens are high users, spending almost 8 hours online daily outside of schoolwork. High internet users spend much more time on every activity, but most notably on gaming.

AVERAGE TIME ONLINE DAILY

- Low time online: **1 hour 42 minutes** online daily
- High time online: **7 hours 54 minutes** online daily

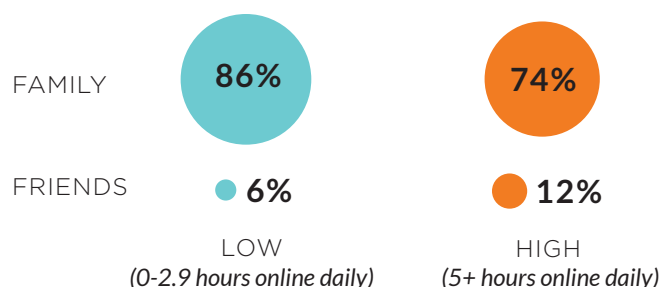
TIME SPENT BY ACTIVITY



Time spent online also seems to impact the voices preteens listen to. High internet users are less likely than low ones to seek advice from family about topics of morality or gender and sexuality. But family and friends still remain their highest influences. Interestingly, they are not more likely to go to online sources even though they spend so much time digitally connected.

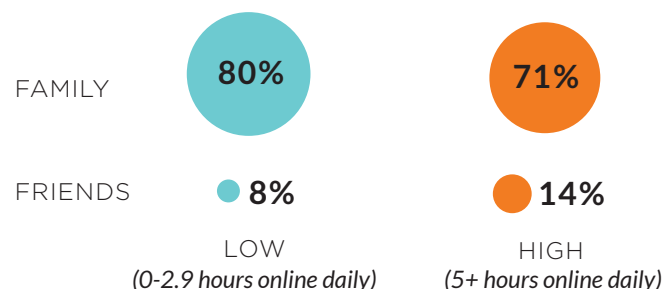
GUIDANCE ABOUT RIGHT AND WRONG

Where do you go most often for information or guidance about what is right and wrong?



GUIDANCE ABOUT GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Where do you go most often for information or guidance about gender and sexuality?



Although other research is noting a correlation between high tech use and mental health struggles,¹ our initial research on Gen Alpha did not demonstrate the same connection. However, this correlation was observed in our global study of Gen Z, showing that high internet users experience many more struggles than low internet users. As we keep learning from Gen Alpha, this is a finding we will continue to monitor.

¹ Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation*.

CONCLUSION



Digital is definitely Gen Alpha's world, and will likely continue to be so as they get older. This generation demonstrates a dependence on digital as a primary way to keep them connected to their friends and spend most of their free hours online.

- GEN ALPHA GAMERS

Any young person you meet is likely to be a gamer. Nine in 10 preteens say they game every day—spending more time on games than social media. Boys in particular spend over 2 hours a day gaming. An easy way to connect with them is to ask what they're playing and why they like it. Their answers can reveal a lot about their interests, and showing genuine interest will encourage them to share more. These conversations can also open doors for them to talk about their social relationships—both online and in person.

- SOCIAL MEDIA STARTS YOUNG

Despite age restrictions, many 11 and 12-year-olds are on platforms like TikTok and Snapchat. Many spend over an hour each day on these platforms. There is no question that social media shapes us and can have serious consequences for young people's self-image, comparison, and vulnerability to bullying. We need to be alert to how our preteens are engaging with these platforms and the choices they are making online. How can we help them use these powerful platforms for positive connections and creative expression while being cautious of their addictive nature and the temptation to compare themselves to others?

- YOUTUBE IS KING

YouTube is a central platform for Gen Alpha and plays a significant role in shaping their views and interests. While videos can be both educational and entertaining, the variety and easy access to so much content presents challenges. Young people are being exposed to a wide range of perspectives that may not be wise, biblical, or true. How can we find and promote fruitful content so that young people on YouTube have channels to follow that are both enjoyable and God-honoring?

- CONTENTMENT VS. CRAVING

Preteens generally feel good about their screen time, but two in five don't think they are getting enough time on a device. There is plenty of research and respected voices sounding the alarm about screen time's potential harms. Avoiding technology isn't really an option, but we can encourage our young people to pay attention to the effects that digital engagement may be having on them and express it. We can also think with them about the kinds of habits that feel healthy and model them in our own lives. How might you, within your own family, approach this topic together in a way that feels collaborative rather than restrictive?

Sex + Gender

MEET GEN ALPHA

Say hi to **Lucas**.

He's 13 years old and lives with his mom and stepdad. They've never gone to church and don't talk about religion or God. Lucas' favorite teacher is gay and, thanks to him, Lucas feels open minded about all types of sexual orientation. Lucas isn't attracted to guys, but he is supportive of his teacher and also a friend who is transitioning from male to female. He has started

questioning his views on sex, though, after recently finding porn online. He wonders if he really does need to wait until marriage (like his parents recommend) or if it is all just a part of growing up and feeling good about yourself.



@lucas_22

👉 live the dream



Isabella is 11 years old and lives in a Christian home. Her parents encourage her to spend time with other girls her age, but some of her classmates have teased her about having girlfriends. She even lost a best friend over it, who didn't want to be seen with Isabella all the time. It's been confusing and hurtful, and now she's starting to wonder if other people might be right. She loves her female friends and enjoys spending time with them.

She feels safe and calm with girls and sometimes scared of boys. Does that mean she's lesbian? Her biggest question right now is, "How can I talk to Mom and Dad about this, or should I? Will they be mad?"



@bella_bella 🌸

friends + Swiftie + cats



WHAT WE DISCOVERED

7 in 10 preteens say gender is the sex a person was born as, but 6 in 10 think it's probably okay for someone to change their body to become a different gender.

Few preteens overall say they identify as a different gender or are looking to date someone of the same gender.

55% of young people believe premarital sex is okay or might be okay.

Half of Gen Alpha believe same-sex marriage is okay or might be okay.

Gen Alpha says they prefer to get information or guidance about gender and sexuality from their family members.

Gender

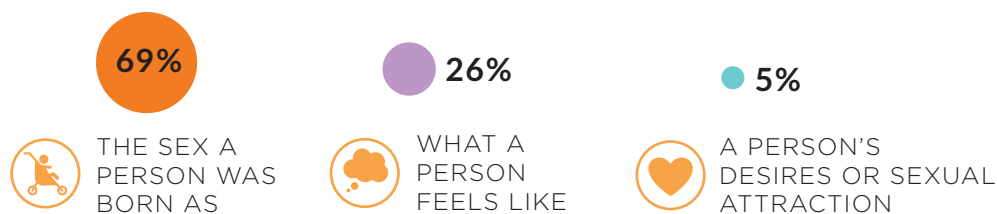
IDENTITY

Gender identity is no longer a “hot topic” so much as it is just a normal topic for this generation. As compared to previous generations, Gen Alpha is more likely to be hearing about and personally dealing with questions of gender and sexuality from a young age, so we wanted to find out their perspective.

The research revealed mixed views at this stage of Gen Alpha’s development. When asked what gender is, 69% say the sex a person was born as. However, 57% say it’s okay or maybe okay for someone to change their body to a different gender. This is a fairly high number of young people who seem open to a non-traditional approach to gender identity.

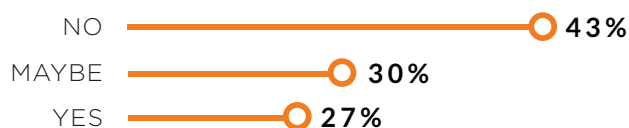
VIEW OF GENDER IDENTITY

I think gender is...



VIEW OF GENDER CHANGE

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



What Gen Alpha believes about gender is a little different depending on their age. Older preteens were less likely to view gender as something determined at birth. However, 12-year-olds were the least likely to say someone should be able to change their body to become a different gender.

GENDER IS THE SEX A PERSON WAS BORN AS



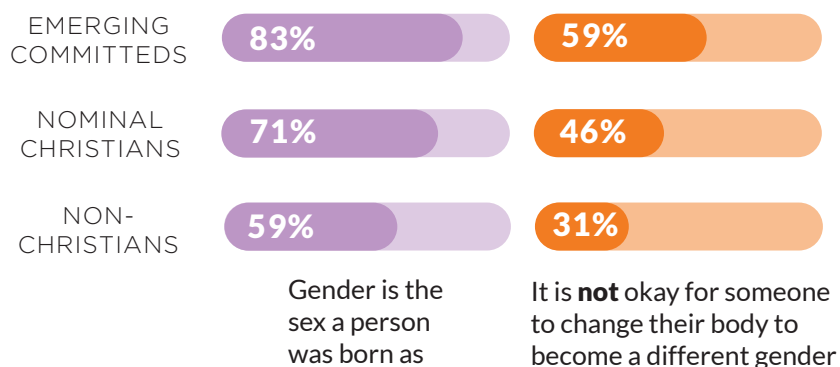
GENDER CHANGE BY AGE

It is okay or might be okay for someone to change their body to become a different gender



It is encouraging to see that faith makes a difference on these topics. Emerging Committed Christians were more likely to hold a traditional view of gender as compared to their non-Christian peers.

THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH



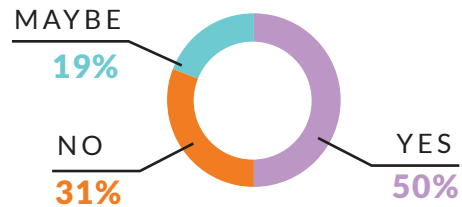
View of SEX AND MARRIAGE

55% of Gen Alpha say it is okay or might be okay to have sex before marriage. Half of Gen Alpha feel the same about same-sex marriage. Most preteens hold these viewpoints. However, boys and older teens tend to be slightly less traditional when it comes to premarital sex.

VIEW OF MARRIAGE



Is it okay to have sex before marriage?



Should marriage be only between a man and a woman?

RESPONSE BY GENDER

It is okay or it might be okay to have sex before marriage



GIRLS



BOYS

Same-sex marriage is okay or might be okay



GIRLS



BOYS

RESPONSE BY AGE

It is okay or it might be okay to have sex before marriage

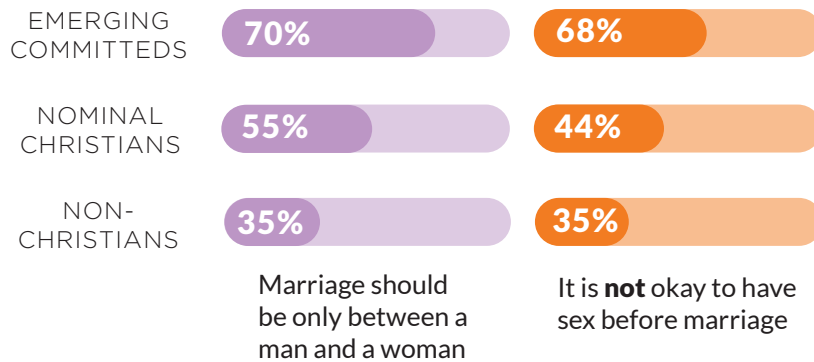


Same-sex marriage is okay or might be okay



Emerging Committed Christians have very different beliefs in this area compared to their peers. They are much less likely to agree with same sex marriage or to believe sex outside of marriage is acceptable.

THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH



MEET GEN ALPHA



@!Mimi
swimlife

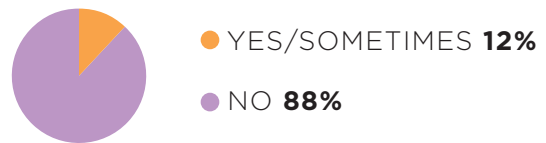
Uncertainty about gender is not uncommon for Gen Alpha, even among those committed to Christ. Take **Mia**, for example. She's 13 years old and has been a Christian basically all her life. She knows that salvation only comes through faith in Jesus, and she's always gone to church with her family. Lately, she's gotten a teen study Bible and is careful to read something from it at least once a week. But Mia also has a problem. For a long time, she's felt like a boy. She is trying to understand God's design for her body, but it doesn't seem to make a difference in her thoughts and emotions. Her parents and pastors have been patient with her and helped her process about identity and being the person God created her to be. But she can tell they're concerned, so she doesn't always share everything she feels. She's been trying to pray about it and her youth leader has come alongside to talk openly, but she's not sure what to do and it feels really hard.

Personal EXPERIENCES

Gender Identity and Relationships

In addition to sharing their viewpoints on gender and relationships, preteens also shared about their personal experiences in these areas. One in eight reported that they identify as a gender different from what they were assigned at birth, and one in 12 say they are looking to date someone of the same sex.¹

I IDENTIFY AS A GENDER DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I WAS ASSIGNED AT BIRTH



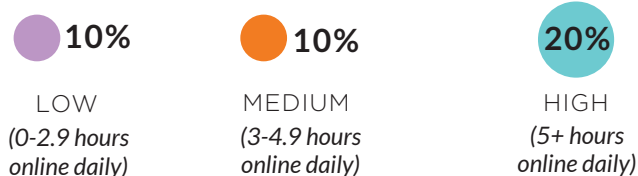
WHEN I THINK ABOUT DATING, I WOULD BE LOOKING FOR...



Preteens who spend more time online were significantly more likely to identify as a different gender or report same-sex attraction. However, higher time online did not appear to shape or influence Gen Alpha's personal beliefs in these areas. While the data reveals a connection between increased online activity and these experiences, the reason for this is unclear. At this age, many preteens tend to mirror the beliefs of their parents, so their personal views may not be fully formed. We are not suggesting that the Internet is driving young people's behaviors, but it is an interesting area for further study as this generation matures.

I IDENTIFY AS A GENDER DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I WAS ASSIGNED AT BIRTH

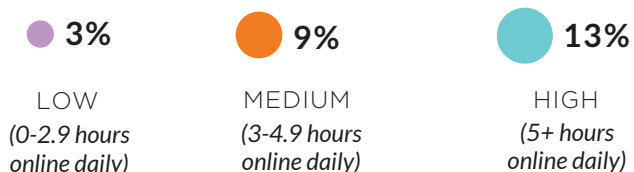
By time online



¹ To determine Gen Alphas who are same-sex attracted, we asked, "When I think about dating, I would be looking for..." and crossed that with their reported gender. This does not include any young people who identify as a gender different than their assigned gender, and then are attracted to the same gender they identify as.

WHEN I THINK ABOUT DATING, I WOULD BE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE OF THE SAME SEX

By time spent online:

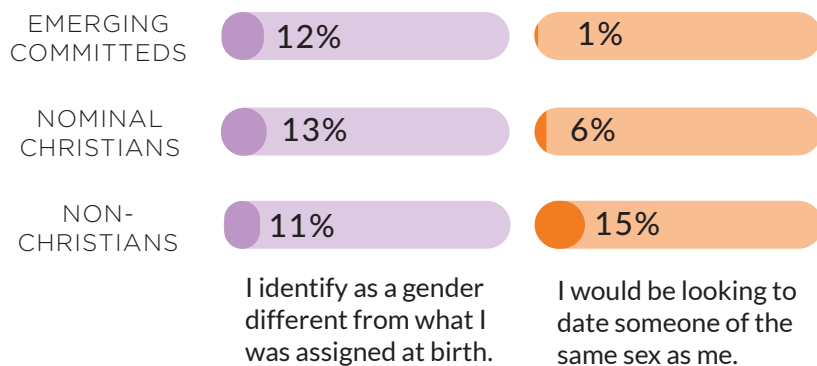


Girls were three times more likely than boys to report looking to date someone of the same sex. Generally, Emerging Committed Christians were less likely than their peers to report same-sex attraction. But they were equally as likely to report identifying as a different gender than assigned at birth.

I would be looking to date someone of the same sex as me.



THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH



As we looked for trends in this data, we observed that same-sex attraction appears to cluster with other behaviors. Many preteens who have recently experienced same-sex attraction also report mental health issues like depression and high anxiety.

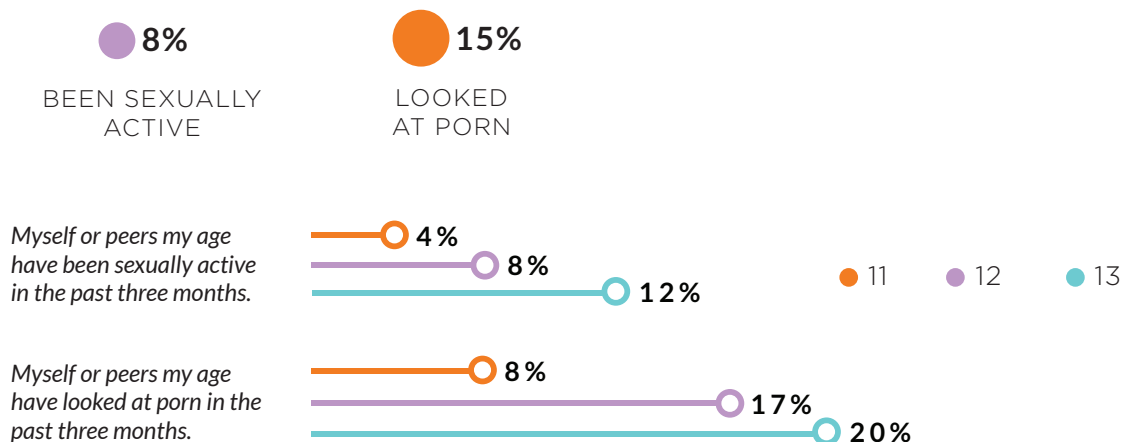
SEX AND PORNOGRAPHY

Sadly, Gen Alpha is not too young to be exposed to the issues of sex and pornography. Other research reveals that most young people are exposed to porn for the first time around age 12—and some even earlier.¹

We asked if they or peers their age have been sexually active or recently used porn. One in 12 young people say they or peers they know have been sexually active in the past three months.² Almost double that number say they or their peers have recently looked at porn.

Pornography usage trended upwards with age, and boys were almost twice as likely as girls to say they or their friends are using it. Rates did not change for Christians versus non-Christians. This suggests that faith is not really a factor in exposure—although we can't know for certain if Christian preteens are reporting for themselves or others.

In the past three months, myself or peers my age (that I am aware of) have:



Parents ARE INFLUENTIAL

It is worth noting again that family is a primary influence on this topic. Three out of four preteens go to a family member most often for guidance on these topics. While these conversations can sometimes be uncomfortable for families, addressing these topics is crucial. The role of family members—whether parents, grandparents, or other close relatives—cannot be overstated in how they frame discussions and impart values. These trusted relationships provide a foundational support system where preteens feel most comfortable and secure.

76%
OF PRETEENS GO TO FAMILY MEMBERS FOR INFORMATION OR GUIDANCE ABOUT GENDER OR SEXUALITY

¹ Common Sense. Teens and Pornography.

² In answering this question preteens defined for themselves what it means to be sexually active.

CONCLUSION



Gender and sexuality will continue to be defining issues, both in culture and in the Church. We can't afford to ignore these conversations, especially as our young people encounter the world's perspective everywhere they go.

- **DEFINING GENDER**

Preteens hold complex and sometimes conflicting views on gender identity. While many believe that gender is determined by the sex assigned at birth, almost half say it is probably ok to change your body to become a different gender. Even Christians can struggle with knowing what to believe about this. Gen Alpha is still forming its views on these significant topics, but the voices of culture are loud. How can we help lovingly guide them towards an understanding of God's design for our bodies?

- **THE NEED FOR HONEST CONVERSATIONS**

Gen Alpha is not too young to have opinions on sex and marriage. Over half of preteens believe sex outside of marriage is or could be okay, and half are open to the idea of same-sex marriage. Young people are exposed to culture's viewpoints on sex from a young age, and some surveyed even acknowledge that they or their peers have been sexually active. This is a great age to establish rhythms of open honest conversations even on these seemingly mature topics. As you do so, preteens will learn to feel secure going to family and trusted adults with their questions and experiences, even as social pressures intensify in the teen years.

- **NAVIGATING SEXUALITY AND GENDER**

A minority of Gen Alpha preteens report personal experiences that reflect non-traditional gender identities or sexual orientations. A small number identify as a gender different from what they were assigned at birth, and a few are interested in dating someone of the same sex. We can't assume that because they are young, they are not thinking about or personally dealing with these issues. How can we be alert to potential challenges our preteens are facing and position ourselves as safe, trustworthy people they can talk to about these topics?

- **FAMILY GUIDANCE**

Despite the impact of online content and peers, family is still the main source of guidance for Gen Alpha. Even when it comes to gender and sexuality. Nearly all preteens say they turn to family members for advice on these topics. Parents and church leaders alike should be encouraged by their influence at a key time in young people's lives. Although the preteen years can be challenging, adult voices are still crucial. These are years to lean in and practice being a safe, compassionate presence that advocates for God's good designs and intentions.

Mental Health

MEET GEN ALPHA

On the outside, **Kai** is a typical 12-year-old in every way. He plays sports, goes to school, and comes home to play video games. But inside he feels different from everyone else. He worries a lot. He can't explain it, but he's almost always felt scared and sad. Sometimes there are good reasons like worrying about gun violence on campus or seeing the latest bad news headlines. But most of the time, he feels heavy even when nothing is really wrong. His therapist says it is depression, but he never hears this talked about at his church. When he's there

he feels like he needs to pretend to be ok to fit in. He spends a lot of time on his phone at night for distraction, but he can't fall asleep. He's wondering if he should pray, but he's not really sure how or if God is really out there.



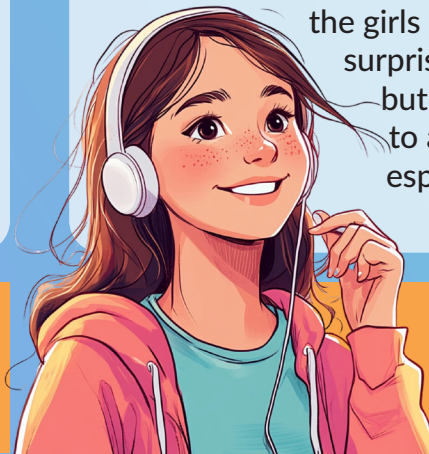
@!kaitai3701

PS5 🎮



Ava lives with her mom, stepdad, and two step-siblings. It was weird to go from being an only child to being a middle child when her mom remarried. Ava is 11 now, but she vividly remembers when her grandparents passed away in 2020—the same year her parents finalized their divorce. Maybe it was then that she started feeling especially anxious and nervous, even about things that didn't used to bother her. She keeps her phone with her at all times and often has headphones on just to listen to music or random YouTube videos. She doesn't like silence. While following some YouTubers,

she's noticed feeling attracted to the girls but not the guys. It's surprising and confusing, but she hasn't talked to anyone about it, especially her mom.



@lava_loverrr

with my besties ❤️

folklore + lover + reputation 🎧 🎵

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

Gen Alpha is already showing mental health struggles including high anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Girls are more likely than boys to be dealing with these issues.

Emerging Committed preteens are doing a little better than their peers in terms of mental health, but not significantly.

11% of preteens surveyed say they or peers their age have considered suicide in the last three months. Thankfully, few report an actual attempt.

Gen Alpha reports some typical worries such as wanting to do well in school and make friends. But they also show new anxieties likely influenced by the pandemic and school violence.

Mental

HEALTH STRUGGLES

Mental health has become a more visible topic over the past few years, so it is unsurprising that Gen Alpha is also self-aware in this area. We asked preteens to tell us about their personal experiences within the past three months and found that many are dealing with depression, high anxiety, and loneliness.

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

Within the past three months, I have experienced:



LONELINESS
45%



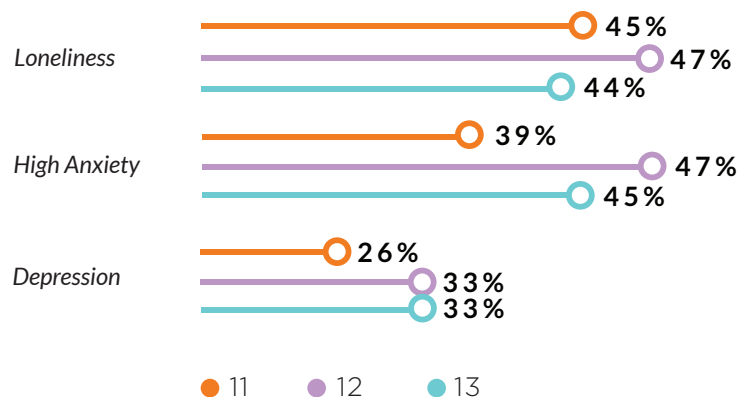
HIGH ANXIETY
44%



DEPRESSION
30%

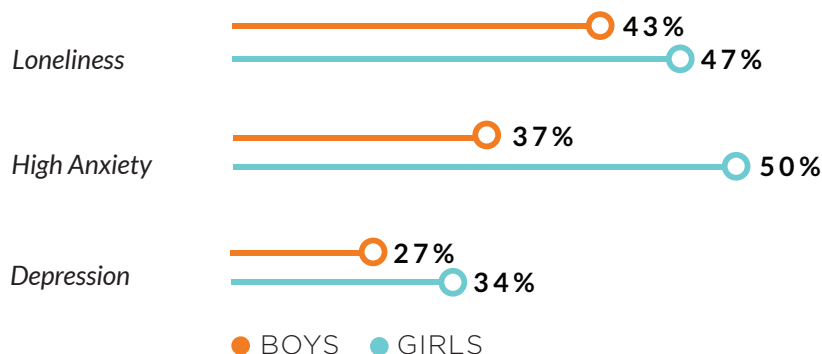
Mental health struggles affect young people of every age, although depression and anxiety seem to be more present for older preteens. The data also showed that girls are struggling much more with their mental health than boys, a theme we observed globally in our earlier research with 13-19 year olds.

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES BY AGE



MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES BY GENDER

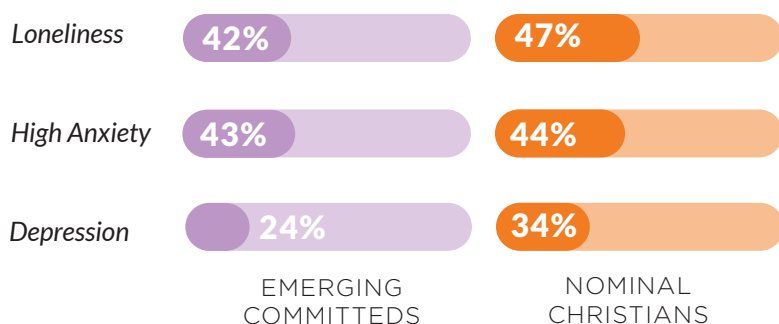
Within the past three months, I have experienced:



We were curious if Gen Alpha's commitment to their Christian faith had any visible effects on their mental health. The data revealed that Emerging Committed Christians struggle less with loneliness and depression than Nominal Christians. However, reports of high anxiety remained about the same.

CHRISTIAN PRETEENS RESPOND

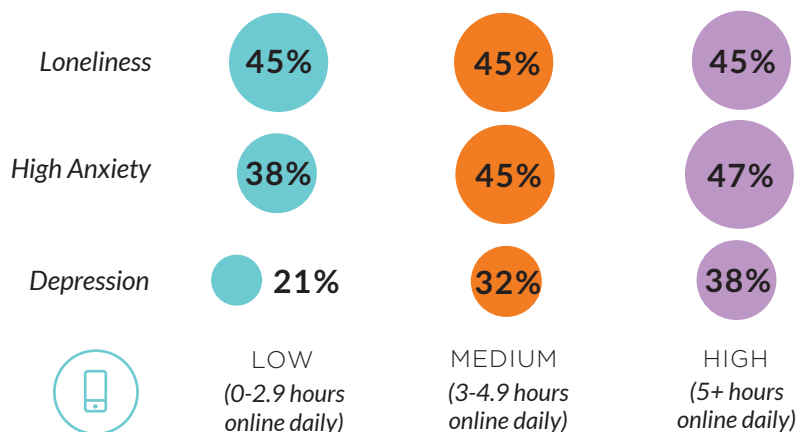
Within the past three months I have experienced:



In our previous Gen Z research, we found that the amount of time a young person spends online is significantly connected to their overall mental health. This study showed that Gen Alpha is experiencing a similar trend line, with increased rates of high anxiety and depression observed among those who spend more time online. The notable exception was loneliness, which remained steady regardless of a preteen's digital connectedness. Nearly half of preteens say they have recently experienced loneliness.

MENTAL HEALTH BY TIME SPENT ONLINE

Within the past three months, I have experienced:



We were also curious what effect a young person's home life is having on their mental health outlook. Half of Gen Alpha live with both biological parents. Those who do generally report fewer mental health challenges than those in single-parent households or blended families.

FAITH IN FAMILIES

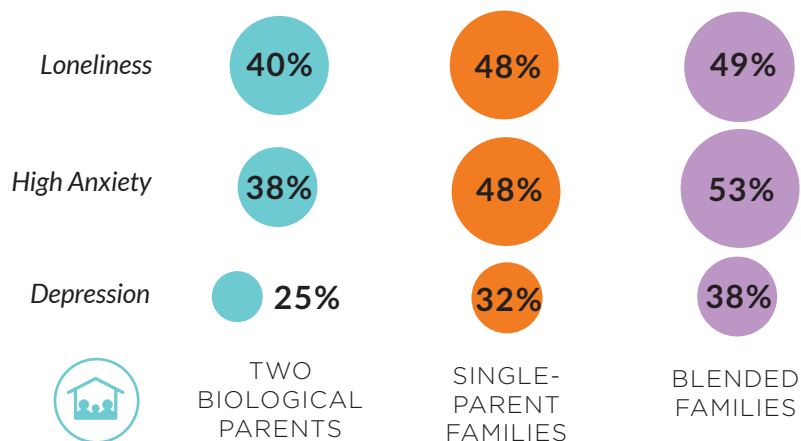
It may not be surprising to find out that young people in homes with both of their biological parents have more stable mental health. The security of having both biological parents present is undeniable. Yet non-traditional households are the reality for half of Gen Alpha. Divorce, absent parents, and living between two or more locations can cause tremendous strain for a young person. But does this mean Gen Alpha is doomed from the start? Not at all!

We see from this research that young people are generally happy with their families regardless of who they live with. In addition, other research has indicated that the most important factor in raising children in a life of faith is not a traditional family structure. Rather, it is being a "single-faith family" who is committed to knowing and following Jesus.¹

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2016/10/26/links-between-childhood-religious-upbringing-and-current-religious-identity/>

WHO DO YOU LIVE WITH?

Within the past three months, I have experienced:

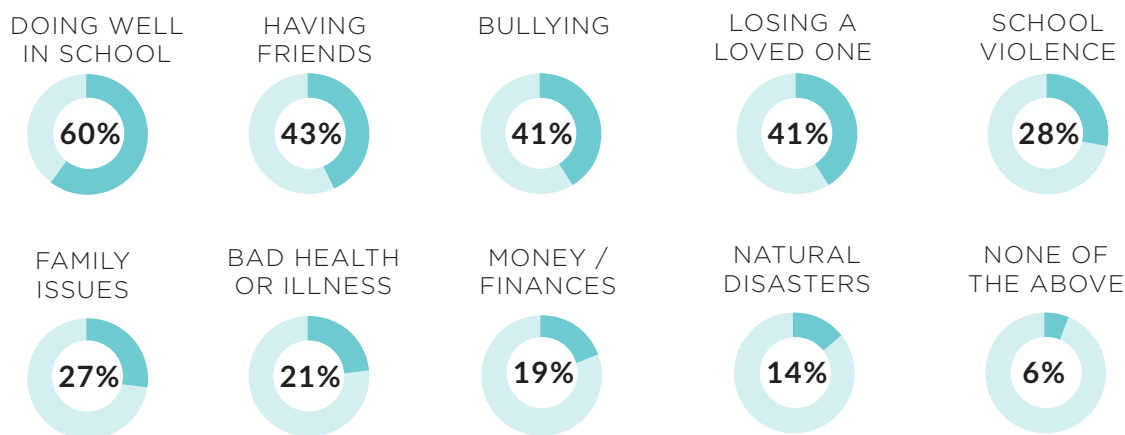


Worries

Given the anxiety that Gen Alpha is reporting, we wanted to know what might be causing young people to feel fearful. Preteens are predictably most worried about doing well in school, followed by social concerns like having friends or being bullied. But we also found it interesting to see that losing a loved one and school violence rounded out their top five. This may reflect this generation's reality of growing up during a global pandemic and their exposure to news coverage surrounding school shootings.

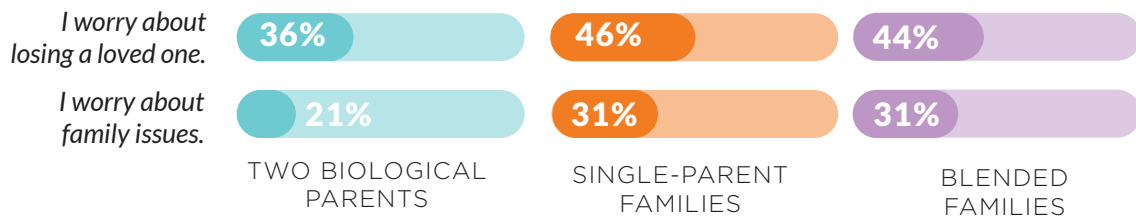
WHAT THINGS DO YOU WORRY ABOUT?

Select all that apply



Unsurprisingly, Gen Alpha's concerns relating to family life are very connected to the kind of household they live in. Young people who live with both biological parents are less concerned about family issues or losing a loved one as compared to preteens in other types of households.

FAMILY CONCERNS



Suicide RISK

In the world we live in, suicide is a very real risk for young people. We wanted to know about Gen Alpha's exposure to and even personal experience with this issue. We asked them to tell us if they had experienced suicidal thoughts or attempted suicide within the past three months or knew of a peer their age who had.

Sadly, suicide risk is a present reality. More than one in 10 reported suicidal thoughts in their lives or peers their age. We noted some differences in the data by age. However this could be a result of survey participants reflecting on older peers.

11%
OF GEN ALPHA
REPORTED
SUICIDAL
THOUGHTS

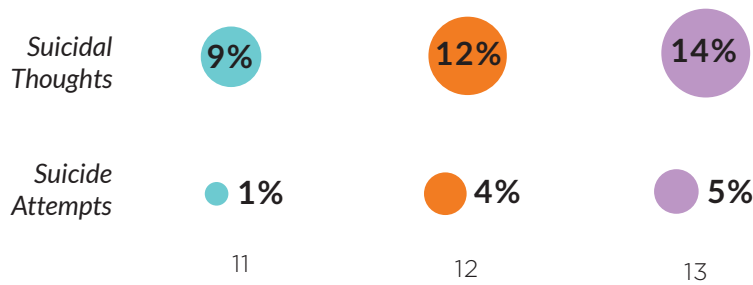
SUICIDE RISK

In the past three months, have you or peers your age (that you are aware of) experienced...?

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS — 11%

SUICIDE ATTEMPTS — 3%

SUICIDE RISK BY AGE¹



Suicide risk is a concern for preteens of this generation worldwide. It is not necessarily one event or experience that triggers preteens to try to take their life, but could be a series of small steps and thoughts that each build on the other. Regardless of the specific circumstances, this data shows that some young people are in seriously dark places that are driving them towards desperate action.

We should be heartbroken for young people who are hurting so deeply they want to end their lives. When it comes to suicide, we are not looking at numbers on a page—but at real people's lives. Any number is too many, and any percentage is too high.

¹ Note that this question was, "In the past three months, have you or peers your age (that you are aware of) experienced...?"

CONCLUSION



Today's young people exhibit more worries and struggles than you might imagine for their age range. Despite being young, Gen Alpha is already dealing with mature issues and experiences. They need loving support and people to come alongside, listen, and wisely guide them.

- **MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS**

This research should be a wake-up call about the very real mental health struggles Gen Alpha is facing. Young people are experiencing challenges and are aware of peers who are struggling too. While a relationship with Jesus provides hope, even preteen Christians who are committed to their faith are not shielded from the difficulties of life. How can we help young people feel seen, supported, and encouraged by the promises the Gospel holds for their lives?

- **GIRLS ARE STRUGGLING**

One of the clearest trends in the data was the difference between the experiences of boys and girls. Girls report struggling much more than boys with their mental health, including feelings of loneliness, high anxiety, and depression. It is critical to be aware of the specific struggles young people face as we seek to meet them in their areas of challenge. How can we particularly support girls and equip them to deal with the mental health challenges they are reporting?

- **SUICIDE IS A REAL CONCERN**

We cannot ignore the fact that even at this young age, there are some preteens who are having suicidal thoughts and have considered taking their own life. While devastating, this doesn't need to come as a surprise. How can we be aware of the risk behaviors associated with these struggles and be proactive in identifying ways to support preteens through this?

- **ALL PRETEENS NEEDS SUPPORT**

Preteens who are committed to their Christian faith tend to experience better mental health. The research showed they feel less lonely and are less likely to struggle with depression than their peers. But it was interesting to note that rates of high anxiety were about the same. This is a reminder that these preteens also need support in navigating today's mental health challenges. They need family, friends, and other adult mentors around them, fostering a community where they feel cared for both spiritually and emotionally. What preteen in your life might God be calling you to come alongside to journey with in an individual way?

ABOUT ONEHOPE

In partnership with local churches, ministries, and governments around the world, OneHope has reached more than 2 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.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The study surveyed 466 teens ages 11-13 in the U.S. This number is a representative sample provided the statistical power to be 95% confident that percentage results were within 5% of the true population percentage for teens ages 11 to 13, and to perform corresponding statistical tests. Quotas were used to ensure an even number of 11, 12, and 13 year olds and an even number of boys and girls in order to have a meaningful sample size for age-based and gender-based analysis and comparisons. The instrument was distributed via Centiment. As a quality control measure, respondents were disqualified if they incorrectly answered a simple attention-check question. The research instrument consisted of 49 questions.

Data for this study was collected from March 18, 2024 to March 21, 2024. Participants received the digital survey from their parents who first had to consent to their child being asked questions about risky and/or potential harmful activities. After consenting, parents were directed to hand the device to their child to complete it. Questions that dealt with especially harmful subjects were framed as "In the past three months, have you or peers your age (that you are aware of)...". This was intended to help the survey feel more safe to young people so they could answer honestly.

Suggested citation:
OneHope. (October 2024). Gen Alpha: The Next Generation.

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Icons from www.flaticon.com

SURVEY

1. How old are you?

- Younger than 11 (excluded)
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14 (excluded)
- 15 (excluded)
- 16 or older (excluded)

2. What was your sex at birth?

- Female
- Male

3. I identify as a gender different from what I was assigned at birth.

- No
- Sometimes
- Yes
- Not sure what this means

4. What is your religion, if any?

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Judaism
- Islam
- I am not sure I believe in God
- I don't believe in God
- Other religion _____
- None of the above

5. (If Christian) Are you Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, or Mormon?

- No
- Catholic
- Jehovah's Witness
- Mormon

6. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin?

- No
- Yes

7. How would you describe your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Other

8. During a typical day, how many hours do you spend online outside of schoolwork?
___ hours

9. During a typical day, approximately how much time do you spend online talking, messaging or video chatting?

- I do not typically do this.
- Less than 30 minutes per day.
- 30 minutes to one hour per day.
- More than an hour each day. Please enter the number of hours ___

10. During a typical day, approximately how much time do you use social media?

- I do not typically do this.
- Less than 30 minutes per day.
- 30 minutes to one hour per day.
- More than an hour each day. Please enter the number of hours ___

11. Which two social media platforms do you use the most?

- Youtube
- TikTok
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitch
- Other (please specify): _____

12. During a typical day, approximately how much time do you spend gaming (Playstation, Switch, Xbox, computer, smartphone, etc.)?

- I do not typically do this.
- Less than 30 minutes per day.
- 30 minutes to one hour per day.
- More than an hour each day. Please enter the number of hours ___

13. How do you feel about your screen time?

- I'm on it too much
- I feel good about it
- I would be on it more if I could

14. Overall, my family experience has been good.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

15. I feel like I have friends I can be my real self with.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

16. My faith beliefs, religion, or spiritual journey are an important part of my identity.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

17. What are the things you worry about most often? (select all that apply)

- Doing well in school
- Bullying
- Bad health or illness
- Family issues
- Having friends
- Losing a loved one
- Natural disasters
- School violence
- Money/finances
- None of the above

18. When I think about dating, I would be looking for

- A girlfriend
- A boyfriend
- Either
- Not sure yet

19. Should marriage be only between a man and a woman?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

20. Is it okay to have sex before marriage?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

21. I think gender is:

- What a person feels like
- The sex a person was born as
- A person's desires or sexual attraction

22. Is it okay for someone to change their body to become a different gender?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

23. Where do you go most often for information or guidance about what is right and wrong? Select only one.

- Family members
- Friends
- Teachers/ Counselors
- Religious leaders or religious texts
- Social media or other online sources (YouTube, websites, Siri/Alexa, etc.)
- Books, magazines, television, radio, or newspaper

24. Where do you go most often for information or guidance about gender or sexuality? Select only one.

- Family members
- Friends
- Teachers/ Counselors
- Religious leaders or religious texts
- Social media or other online sources (YouTube, websites, Siri/Alexa, etc.)
- Books, magazines, television, radio, or newspaper

25. I feel like I can be honest with my parents about what is going on in my life.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely or Never

26. I have an adult in my life who I can go to if I am in trouble (other than my parent/ caregiver).

- Yes
- No

27. When I have questions about religion or God, I usually ask (select up to two)

- My mom
- My dad
- An adult at church/synagogue/mosque
- Another trusted adult (family member, teacher, etc)
- A friend or sibling
- Online (Alexa, Siri, phone, or tablet)
- I don't have anyone to ask
- I don't have questions about religion or God

Please take a quick moment to show us that you're reading each question. Please select 'Agree' below.

- Strongly disagree (exclude)
- Disagree (exclude)
- Neutral (exclude)
- Agree
- Strongly Agree (exclude)

In the past three months, did you experience:

28. Loneliness?

- Yes
- No

Depression?

- Yes
- No

High anxiety?

- Yes
- No

In the past three months, have you or peers your age (that you are aware of) experienced...?

29. Gotten drunk?

- Yes
- No

Used drugs?

- Yes
- No

Looked at porn?

- Yes
- No

Had suicidal thoughts?

- Yes
- No

Attempted suicide?

- Yes
- No

Been sexually active?

- Yes
- No

30. How often do you attend religious services?

- Never
- Several times a year
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

31. I would be open to attending a Christian church service if a friend invited me.

- Disagree
- Agree
- I'm not sure
- I already attend church

32. How often do you read or listen to the Bible, Quran or other religious scriptures on your own?

- Never
- Several times a year
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

33. How often do you pray on your own?

- Never
- Several times a year
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

34. Which of these activities do you regularly do? (select all that apply)

- Manifesting
- Crystal healing
- Ouija Boards
- Saging/Smudging
- Astrology/Zodiac signs
- Tarot cards
- None of these

35. What is your parent/family's religion, if any? (select all that apply)

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Judaism
- Islam
- Other religion
- I am not sure they believe in God
- They don't believe in God
- I don't know

36. Do both your parents follow the same religion?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

The following questions were asked of participants who identified as Christian or said they had Christian parents.

37. What religious activities do your parents regularly do (if any)? (select all that apply)

- Go to church
- Pray
- Read the Bible at home
- Talk with others about their faith
- Listen to worship music
- None of these

38. My mom or dad prayed with me this week.

- Yes
- No

39. My mom or dad read or listened to the Bible with me this week.

- Yes
- No

The following question was asked of participants who identified as Christian.

40. I can remember a time when God answered a prayer.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

The following question was asked of all participants.

41. In my family, I feel comfortable asking any question I want about faith.

- Not really
- Sometimes
- Yes

The following questions were asked of participants who identified as Christian.

42. How or with whom do you share your faith? (select all that apply)

- No one, I keep it to myself
- Online / Social media
- With family
- With friends
- With strangers

43. I feel responsible to share my faith.

- Yes
- No

44. I feel confident sharing my faith.

- Yes
- No

45. Have you been taught how to share your faith with others?

- Yes
- No

The following questions were asked of all participants.

46. What do you believe about God?

- I believe in a higher power but not in a personal God.
- God exists and I can have a personal relationship with Him.
- God is an old idea that can be harmful.
- I really do not ever think about God.

47. What do you believe about the Bible?

- The Bible is an old book that causes problems.
- I never really think about the Bible.
- The Bible has value but is not the Word of God.
- The Bible is the Word of God.

48. What do you believe about Jesus?

- I never think about Jesus.
- Jesus is worth studying as a teacher or sage.
- Jesus is a very old legend that may be harmful.
- Jesus is the son of God.

The final question was asked of participants who identified as Christian.

49. Forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

