

PewResearchCenter



THE PEW
FORUM
ON RELIGION
& PUBLIC LIFE

EMBARGOED COPY – NOT FOR
PUBLICATION OR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL
12:01 a.m. EDT, SEPT. 28, 2010

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2010

U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Luis Lugo,

Director

Alan Cooperman,

Associate Director, Research

Erin O'Connell

Associate Director, Communications

Sandra Stencel

Associate Director, Editorial

(202) 419-4550

www.pewforum.org

About the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

This report was produced by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life. The Pew Forum delivers timely, impartial information on issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs. The Pew Forum is a nonpartisan, nonadvocacy organization and does not take positions on policy debates. Based in Washington, D.C., the Pew Forum is a project of the Pew Research Center, which is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

The report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

Pew Forum

Luis Lugo, *Director*

Research

Alan Cooperman, *Associate Director, Research*

John Green, *Senior Research Adviser*

Greg Smith, *Senior Researcher*

Christine Bhutta, Allison Pond, Neha Sahgal

and Jacqueline Wenger, *Research Associates*

Scott Clement, *Research Analyst*

Noble Kuriakose and Elizabeth Podrebarac,

Research Assistants

Editorial

Sandra Stencil, *Associate Director, Editorial*

Diana Yoo, *Graphic Designer*

Tracy Miller, *Editor*

Hilary Ramp, *Assistant Editor*

Communications and Web Publishing

Erin O'Connell, *Associate Director, Communications*

Brian Bailey, *Online Project Manager*

Mary Schultz, *Communications Manager*

Liga Plaveniece, *Program Coordinator*

Pew Research Center

Andrew Kohut, *President*

Paul Taylor, *Executive Vice President*

Elizabeth Mueller Gross, *Vice President*

Scott Keeter, *Director of Survey Research*

Michael Piccorossi, *Director of Digital Strategy*

Russell Heimlich, *Web Developer*

Leah Christian, *Senior Researcher,*

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

Visit <http://www.pewforum.org/Other-Beliefs-and-Practices/U-S-Religious-Knowledge-Survey.aspx> to see the online version of "US Religious Knowledge Survey."

Pew Research Center's Forum
on Religion & Public Life
1615 L St., NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036-5610
Phone (202) 419-4550
Fax (202) 419-4559
www.pewforum.org

© 2010 Pew Research Center

Project Manager and Polling Consultant

Mike Mokrzycki

Table of Contents

	PAGE
Preface	4
Executive Summary	6
Measuring Religious Knowledge	14
Who Knows What About Religion	16
Factors Linked With Religious Knowledge	37
Appendix A: Survey Methodology	56
Appendix B: Survey Topline	60

Copyright © 2010 Pew Research Center
www.pewresearch.org

Preface

In his 2007 book, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know – And Doesn't*, Boston University professor Stephen Prothero wrote that “Americans are both deeply religious and profoundly ignorant about religion.” To support his contention, Prothero offered many compelling anecdotes and some isolated findings from public opinion polls. He also cited a few studies about the extent of biblical literacy among young people. But, as he discovered, there was no comprehensive, national survey assessing the general state of religious knowledge among U.S. adults.

To address this gap, the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life set out to gauge what Americans know about their own faiths and about other religions. The resulting survey covers a wide range of topics, including the beliefs and practices of major religious traditions as well as the role of religion in American history and public life. Based on an analysis of answers from more than 3,400 people to 32 religious knowledge questions, this report attempts to provide a baseline measurement of how much Americans know about religion today.

Readers should bear in mind some key limitations of the survey. With a few notable exceptions – such as a study by Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock of Northern California churchgoers in 1963 and some Gallup questions from the 1950s – the Pew Forum’s staff found little historical data on levels of religious knowledge in the U.S. public. As a consequence, we cannot say with assurance whether Americans in 2010 know more, or less, about religion than prior generations did. Before we put any religious knowledge questions to the public, we also decided that, no matter what the results, we would not give the public an “A,” an “F” or any other grade because we have no objective way of determining how much the public *should* know about religion. Moreover, we could have designed harder questions, or easier ones. As it happens, through a combination of good survey design and good luck, the results are an almost perfect bell curve in which the average score is exactly half of the 32 possible correct answers, and very few people got all questions right or all questions wrong. Readers can decide for themselves whether this justifies Prothero’s conclusion or not.

In designing the survey and analyzing the results, we were fortunate to be able to draw on the expertise of an exceptional panel of advisers, including Prothero, Marilyn Mellowes of WGBH-Boston and John Green of the University of Akron. We also received invaluable help from colleagues at the Pew Research Center, particularly Scott Keeter

and Leah Christian, who shared their experience in conducting knowledge surveys. We are grateful to David Dutwin and Robyn Rapoport of Social Science Research Solutions for their advice and diligent work on methodological issues. Our friends at WGBH Television in Boston encouraged this survey and collaborated with us in releasing it (along with WGBH’s three-part PBS documentary, “God in America”) to the public at a Sept. 28, 2010, symposium generously hosted by the Newseum in Washington, D.C. We also received insightful advice on portions of this report from E.J. Dionne of the Brookings Institution and Charles Haynes of the First Amendment Center. And, most of all, we wish to thank our polling consultant, Mike Mokrzycki, for his professional expertise, project management skills and unfailing good cheer. With all this help, any failings of this report are, needless to say, ours alone.

Luis Lugo, Director

Alan Cooperman, Associate Director, Research

U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey

Executive Summary

Atheists and agnostics, Jews and Mormons are among the highest-scoring groups on a new survey of religious knowledge, outperforming evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants and Catholics on questions about the core teachings, history and leading figures of major world religions.

On average, Americans correctly answer 16 of the 32 religious knowledge questions on the survey by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life. Atheists and agnostics average 20.9 correct answers. Jews and Mormons do about as well, averaging 20.5 and 20.3 correct answers, respectively. Protestants as a whole average 16 correct answers and Catholics as a whole 14.7. Atheists and agnostics, Jews and Mormons perform better than other groups on the survey even after controlling for differing levels of education.

Atheists and Agnostics, Mormons and Jews Score Best on Religious Knowledge Survey

Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32

Total	16.0
Atheist/Agnostic	20.9
Jewish	20.5
Mormon	20.3
White evangelical Protestant	17.6
White Catholic	16.0
White mainline Protestant	15.8
Nothing in particular	15.2
Black Protestant	13.4
Hispanic Catholic	11.6

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

On questions about Christianity – including a battery of questions about the Bible –Mormons (7.9 out of 12 right on average) and white evangelical Protestants (7.3 correct on average) show the highest levels of knowledge. Jews and atheists/agnostics stand out for their knowledge of other world religions, including Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism; out of 11 such questions on the survey, Jews answer 7.9 correctly (nearly three better than the national average) and atheists/agnostics answer 7.5 correctly (2.5 better than the national average). Atheists/agnostics and Jews also do particularly well on questions about the role of religion in public life, including a question about what the U.S. Constitution says about religion.

These are among the key findings of the U.S. Religious Knowledge

Survey, a nationwide poll conducted from May 19 through June 6, 2010, among 3,412 Americans age 18 and older, on landlines and cell phones, in English and Spanish. Jews, Mormons and atheists/agnostics were oversampled to allow analysis of these relatively small groups.¹

Previous surveys by the Pew Research Center have shown that America is among the most religious of the world's developed nations. Nearly six-in-ten U.S. adults say that religion is “very important” in their lives, and roughly four-in-ten say they attend worship services at least once a week. But the U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey shows

Mormons and Evangelicals Know Most about Christianity; Atheists/Agnostics and Jews Do Best on World Religions

Average # of questions answered correctly about...

	Bible and Christianity (out of 12)	World religions (out of 11)	Religion in public life (out of 4)
Total	6.0	5.0	2.2
Christian	6.2	4.7	2.1
Protestant	6.5	4.6	2.1
White evangelical	7.3	4.8	2.3
White mainline	5.8	4.9	2.2
Black Protestant	5.9	3.9	1.7
Catholic	5.4	4.7	2.1
White Catholic	5.9	5.1	2.2
Hispanic Catholic	4.2	3.6	1.7
Mormon	7.9	5.6	2.3
Jewish	6.3	7.9	2.7
Unaffiliated	5.3	6.0	2.3
Atheist/Agnostic	6.7	7.5	2.8
Nothing in particular	4.9	5.4	2.1

The two highest scores in each category are shown in bold.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

¹ The Pew Forum's 2007 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey estimated that Jews and Mormons each make up about 1.7% of the U.S. public, while atheists and agnostics combined account for about 4% of the U.S. population. Atheists and agnostics are treated as a single group throughout this report. The survey sample included too few interviews with atheists to analyze them separately. For more details on the sample sizes of religious groups, see Appendix A.

that large numbers of Americans are uninformed about the tenets, practices, history and leading figures of major faith traditions – including their own. Many people also think the constitutional restrictions on religion in public schools are stricter than they really are.

More than four-in-ten Catholics in the United States (45%) do not know that their church teaches that the bread and wine used in Communion do not merely symbolize but actually become the body and blood of Christ. About half of Protestants (53%) cannot correctly identify Martin Luther as the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation, which made their religion a separate branch of Christianity. Roughly four-in-ten Jews (43%) do not recognize that Maimonides, one of the most venerated rabbis in history, was Jewish.

In addition, fewer than half of Americans (47%) know that the Dalai Lama is Buddhist. Fewer than four-in-ten (38%) correctly associate Vishnu and Shiva with Hinduism. And only about a quarter of all Americans (27%) correctly answer that most people in Indonesia – the country with the world's largest Muslim population – are Muslims.

What the Public Knows About Religion

At least two-thirds know...

Public school teachers cannot lead class in prayer	89%
Atheist is someone who does not believe in God	85
Mother Teresa was Catholic	82
Moses was the Bible figure who led the exodus from Egypt	72
Jesus was born in Bethlehem	71
Constitution says government shall neither establish nor interfere with religion	68
Most people in Pakistan are Muslim	68

About half know...

Golden rule is not one of Ten Commandments	55
Koran is the Islamic holy book	54
Ramadan is the Islamic holy month	52
Joseph Smith was Mormon	51
Dalai Lama is Buddhist	47
Martin Luther inspired Reformation	46
Jewish Sabbath begins on Friday	45
Four Gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	45

Less than a third know...

Most people in Indonesia are Muslim	27
Public school teachers can read from Bible as example of literature	23
Only Protestants (not Catholics) traditionally teach salvation comes through faith alone	16
Jonathan Edwards participated in First Great Awakening	11
Maimonides was Jewish	8

See survey topline (Appendix B) for full question wording and results for all questions.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

The survey also finds widespread confusion over the line between teaching and preaching in public schools. Out of a total of 41 knowledge questions (32 about religion and nine testing general knowledge) the single question that respondents most frequently get right is whether U.S. Supreme Court rulings allow teachers to lead public school classes in prayer. Nine-in-ten (89%) correctly say this is not allowed. But among the questions most often answered *incorrectly* is whether public school teachers are permitted to read from the Bible as an example of literature. Fully two-thirds of people surveyed (67%) also say “no” to this question, even though the Supreme Court has clearly stated that the Bible may be taught for its “literary and historic” qualities, as long as it is part of a secular curriculum.² On a third question along these lines, just 36% of the public knows that comparative religion classes may be taught in public schools. Together, this block of questions suggests that many Americans *think* the constitutional restrictions on religion in public schools are tighter than they really are.

Knowledge of Religion in Schools

% who know public school teachers...

CANNOT lead class in prayer	89%
CAN offer comparative religion course	36
CAN read from Bible as example of literature	23

Q50a-c

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

On the other hand, most Americans are able to correctly answer at least half of the survey’s questions about the Bible. For example, roughly seven-in-ten (71%) know that, according to the Bible, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. More than six-in-ten (63%) correctly name Genesis as the first book of the Bible. And more than half know that the Golden Rule – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” – is *not* one of the Ten Commandments. On the full battery of seven questions about the Bible (five Old Testament and two New Testament items) Mormons do best, followed by white evangelical Protestants. Atheists/agnostics, black Protestants and Jews come next, all exhibiting greater knowledge of the Bible than white mainline Protestants and white Catholics, who in turn outscore those who describe their religion as nothing in particular.

² Writing for the Supreme Court majority in its 1963 ruling in *Abington School District v. Schempp*, Justice Tom Clark made a case for the importance of the study of religion as the court clarified how public school teachers may go about it: “. . . [I]t might well be said that one’s education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment.”

Factors in Religious Knowledge

What factors seem to contribute to religious knowledge?

Data from the survey indicate that educational attainment – how much schooling an individual has completed – is the single best predictor of religious knowledge. College graduates get nearly eight more questions right on average than do people with a high school education or less. Having taken a religion course in college is also strongly associated with higher religious knowledge.

Other factors linked with religious knowledge include reading Scripture at least once a week and talking about religion with friends and family. People who say they frequently talk about religion with friends and family get an average of roughly two more questions right than those who say they rarely or never discuss religion. People with the highest levels of religious commitment – those who say that they attend worship services at least once a week and that religion is very important in their lives – generally demonstrate higher levels of religious knowledge than those with medium or low religious commitment.³ Having regularly attended religious education classes or participated in a youth group as a child adds more than two questions to the average number answered correctly compared with those who seldom or never participated in these activities. And those who attended private school score more than two questions better on average than those who attended public school when they were growing up. Interestingly, however, those who attended a private *religious* school score no better than those who attended a private *nonreligious* school.

This survey and previous Pew Forum studies have shown that Jews and atheists/agnostics have high levels of educational attainment on average, which partially explains their performance on the religious knowledge survey. However, *even after controlling for levels of education* and other key demographic traits (race, age, gender and region),

Education Linked With Greater Religious Knowledge

Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32

		Sample size
Total	16.0	3,412
College grad+	20.6	1,233
Some college	17.5	803
HS or less	12.8	1,353

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
May 19-June 6, 2010

³ This may seem paradoxical, since atheists and agnostics have very low levels of religious commitment and yet score very well on the survey questions. However, atheists and agnostics account for a relatively small share of the total number of people with low levels of religious commitment; 4% of Americans describe themselves as atheists or agnostics, while fully 35% have low religious commitment. Atheists and agnostics answer an average of 20.9 questions correctly, compared with an average of 15.4 correct answers among people with low religious commitment who do *not* describe themselves as atheists or agnostics.

significant differences in religious knowledge persist among adherents of various faith traditions. Atheists/agnostics, Jews and Mormons still have the highest levels of religious knowledge, followed by evangelical Protestants, then those whose religion is nothing in particular, mainline Protestants and Catholics. Atheists/agnostics and Jews stand out for high levels of knowledge about world religions other than Christianity, though they also score at or above the national average on questions about the Bible and Christianity. Holding demographic factors constant, evangelical Protestants outperform most groups (with the exceptions of Mormons and atheists/agnostics) on questions about the Bible and Christianity, but evangelicals fare less well compared with other groups on questions about world religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism. Mormons are the highest-scoring group on questions about the Bible.

When education and other demographic traits are held equal, whites score better than minorities on the survey's religious knowledge questions, men score somewhat better than women, and people outside the South score better than Southerners. The oldest group in the population (age 65 and older) gets fewer questions right than other age groups. However, people 65 and older do about as well as people under age 50 on questions about the Bible and Christianity; they do less well on questions about other world religions.

Other Findings

Other findings of the U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey include:

- On world religions other than Christianity, about six-in-ten Americans (62%) know that most people in India are Hindus. About half know that Ramadan is the Islamic holy month (52%) and can name the Koran as the Muslim holy book (54%). Roughly one-third (36%) correctly associate striving for nirvana with Buddhism.
- Around four-in-ten Americans know that the Mormon religion was founded sometime after 1800 (44%) and that the Book of Mormon tells the story of Jesus appearing to people in the Americas (40%). About half (51%) correctly identify Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as a Mormon.
- In addition to questions about religious knowledge, the survey includes nine general knowledge questions (on history, politics, science and literature) for

comparison purposes. These show, for example, that about six-in-ten Americans can name the vice president of the United States (59%) and understand that lasers do *not* work by focusing sound waves (60%). More than seven-in-ten (72%) correctly associate Susan B. Anthony with the movement to give women the right to vote, while just 42% know that Herman Melville was the author of the novel *Moby Dick*.

- Overall, people who score well on the general knowledge questions also tend to do well on the religion questions. Atheists/agnostics and Jews correctly answer an average of roughly seven of the nine general knowledge questions. Among the public overall, the average respondent correctly answers 5.2 of these general knowledge questions.
- While people with a high level of religious commitment did better than average on the religion questions, people with low levels of religious commitment did better than average on the general knowledge questions.
- Many Americans are devoted readers of Scripture: More than a third (37%) say they read the Bible or other Holy Scriptures at least once a week, not counting worship services. But Americans as a whole are much less inclined to read other books about religion. Nearly half of Americans who are affiliated with a religion (48%) say they “seldom” or “never” read books (other than Scripture) or visit websites about *their own* religion, and 70% say they seldom or never read books or visit websites about *other* religions.
- Mormons, black Protestants and white evangelicals are the most frequent readers of materials about religion. Fully half of all Mormons (51%) and roughly three-in-ten white evangelicals (30%) and black Protestants (29%) report that they read books or go online to learn about *their own* religion at least once a week. Only a small fraction of all religiously affiliated Americans – 6% of the general public and no more than 8% of any religious group – say they read books (other than Scripture) or visit websites to learn about religions *other than their own* at least once a week.

The remainder of this report is divided into two parts. Section II, “Who Knows What About Religion,” focuses on differences between religious groups in eight domains of knowledge: the Bible, Elements of Christianity, Elements of Judaism, Elements of Mormonism, World Religions, Atheism and Agnosticism, the Role of Religion in Public

Life, and Nonreligious Topics. Section III, “Factors Linked with Religious Knowledge,” describes factors associated with religious knowledge. Details about the survey’s methodology are available in Appendix A, and the full wording of all questions and topline survey results are provided in Appendix B. The entire report is available online at <http://www.pewforum.org/Other-Beliefs-and-Practices/U-S-Religious-Knowledge-Survey.aspx>.

Readers who would like to take an online quiz of 15 questions selected from the survey (and see how they perform compared with the national average and different religious groups on those questions) may do so at <http://features.pewforum.org/quiz/us-religious-knowledge/>.

Measuring Religious Knowledge (FAQs)

Does the survey reflect the most important things to know about religion?

Not necessarily. Nor is it meant to test mere trivia. With help from a panel of experts (including Boston University Professor Stephen Prothero, author of the 2007 book *Religious Literacy*), the Pew Forum selected questions intended to serve as indicators of how much people know in several areas: religious history, teachings of major religions, religious leaders, Holy Scriptures, the global geography of religion and the role of religion in American public life. The questions included in the survey are intended to be representative of a body of important knowledge about religion; they are not meant to be a list of the *most* essential facts.

Are some of the survey questions too hard – or too easy?

To discern differences in knowledge, the questions vary widely in difficulty. The harder questions help to separate out people who are very knowledgeable about religion; the easier questions help to differentiate the least knowledgeable people from the rest of the public. The portion of respondents who got each question right ranged from 8% to 89%, and there was a nearly perfect “bell curve” to the overall pattern: On average, Americans correctly answer exactly half the religious knowledge questions (16 out of 32). Very few people got all or nearly all of the questions right, and very few got all or nearly all wrong.

Do the people who agree to take a survey like this tend to be more interested in – and more knowledgeable about – religion?

This was a major concern in the design and testing of the questionnaire. To try to minimize such “nonresponse bias,” the telephone survey began with nonreligious questions, the order and wording of the questions were designed to keep respondents engaged, and each interview was held to an average of roughly 20 minutes, about the same as other Pew Research Center surveys. The Pew Forum also kept careful track of people who quit midstream. All telephone surveys suffer “break-offs”; the break-off rate for this survey was not abnormal. That said, those who broke off partway through the questionnaire were doing worse than average up to that point. If all the people who broke off had completed the survey, the average number of correct answers to the religious knowledge questions may have been lower by one question.

Does this survey test people’s recall rather than “real” knowledge?

A person may have learned a fact and know it – it is stored in memory – but just cannot recall it on the spur of the moment. For this reason, the survey consisted mostly of multiple-choice questions, which test people’s ability to recognize a correct answer from a list rather than their ability to recall facts on demand. But four knowledge items – three related to religion, and one not – were asked in an open-ended format, mainly to allow comparison with past surveys that asked those same questions.

How does the survey account for people guessing at answers when questions are multiple-choice?

Yes, guessing is possible, though interviewers subtly discouraged it, telling each respondent twice in the survey, “If you don’t know the answer just tell me and we’ll move to the next question.” For all religious knowledge questions combined, a quarter of the time respondents volunteered that they did not know the answer, about the same rate as they gave wrong answers. The number of “don’t knows” peaked at 71%, on a question about the Jewish philosopher Maimonides.

Who Knows What About Religion

The Pew Forum's religious knowledge survey includes 32 questions about various aspects of religion: the Bible, Christianity, Judaism, Mormonism, world religions, religion in public life, and atheism and agnosticism. The average respondent answered 16 of the 32 religious knowledge questions correctly. Just 2% of those surveyed answered 29 or more questions correctly (including just eight individuals, out of 3,412 surveyed, who scored a perfect 32); 3% correctly answered fewer than five questions (including six respondents who answered no questions correctly).

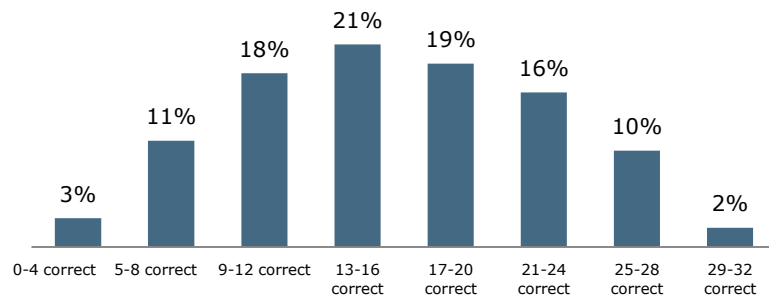
The scores on individual questions range from 8% to 89% correct. At the top end of that scale, at least eight-in-ten

Americans know

that teachers are not allowed to lead public school classes in prayer, that the term "atheist" refers to someone who does not believe in God, and that Mother Teresa was Catholic. At the other end of the spectrum, just 8% know that the 12th-century philosopher and Torah scholar Maimonides was Jewish, and 11% correctly identify Jonathan Edwards, viewed by many scholars as the pre-eminent American theologian, as a preacher during the First Great Awakening, a period of heightened religious fervor in the 1730s and '40s.⁴

Overall Performance on Religious Knowledge Survey

Distribution of correct answers



PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
May 19-June 6, 2010

⁴ See, for example, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (2003) by George M. Marsden, who writes: "By many estimates, [Edwards] was the most acute early American philosopher and the most brilliant of all American theologians. ... A heralded preacher, he delivered what became America's most famous sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*." Marsden (p. 1).

Overall, the three groups that perform best in this survey are atheists and agnostics (who get an average of 20.9 out of 32 questions right), Jews (20.5 questions right on average) and Mormons (20.3 questions right). Looked at another way, 27% of Jews, 22% of atheists and agnostics, and 20% of Mormons score in the top 10% of all respondents in overall number of correct answers to religious knowledge questions, getting at least 26 questions right. As will be discussed in detail later in this report, these groups display greater religious knowledge even when education and other factors are held constant.

Mormons outperform Jews as well as atheists and agnostics on questions about the Bible but do not perform as well as the other two groups on questions having to do with world religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

White evangelical Protestants answer an average of 17.6 religious knowledge questions correctly. Though white evangelicals have lower scores than Jews and atheists/agnostics overall, they do significantly better on questions about the Bible. White evangelicals correctly answer an average of 5.1 out of seven

Bible questions, compared with 4.4 among atheists and agnostics and 4.3 among Jews. Mormons answer almost six of the seven Bible questions correctly on average.

White mainline Protestants and white Catholics each closely resemble the public overall, getting about half of the 32 religious knowledge questions right on average (16 for white Catholics, 15.8 for white mainline Protestants). Those who describe their religion as “nothing in particular” answer an average of 15.2 questions correctly. Black Protestants answer an average of 13.4 questions correctly, and Hispanic Catholics get 11.6 right on average. Scores on this survey are higher among whites than among blacks or Hispanics even after controlling for other factors linked with religious knowledge, including education and religious affiliation.

How Religious Groups Performed on the U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey

	Average # correct out of 32	% with 17 or more correct
Total	16.0	47
Christian	15.7	45
Protestant	16.0	46
White evangelical	17.6	56
White mainline	15.8	45
Black Protestant	13.4	28
Catholic	14.7	40
White Catholic	16.0	48
Hispanic Catholic	11.6	20
Mormon	20.3	74
Jewish	20.5	73
Unaffiliated	16.6	52
Atheist/Agnostic	20.9	82
Nothing in particular	15.2	42

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

EMBARGOED COPY – NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL 12:01 a.m. EDT, SEPT. 28, 2010

The remainder of this section analyzes religious knowledge within the following subject areas:

The Bible: Five questions on the Old Testament and two on the New Testament.

Elements of Christianity: The Bible items plus questions about Catholic teaching on the Eucharist, Protestant teaching about salvation through faith alone, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther and the First Great Awakening.

Elements of Judaism: The five Old Testament items plus questions about the Jewish Sabbath and Maimonides.

Elements of Mormonism: Three questions on the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Book of Mormon.

Knowledge of world religions: Items on the Jewish Sabbath and Maimonides (Judaism), Ramadan and the Koran (Islam), nirvana and the Dalai Lama (Buddhism), Vishnu and Shiva (Hinduism), Greek mythology (Zeus) and the religious composition of India, Pakistan and Indonesia.

Atheism and agnosticism: Definitions of each term.

Role of religion in public life: Questions on separation of church and state and constitutional restrictions on religion in public schools.

Knowledge of nonreligious topics: Nine questions on politics, science, history and literature.

Pew Forum Religious Knowledge Questions

Questions below have been paraphrased for brevity; most response options were rotated. See topline survey results (Appendix B) for exact wording and question order.

Bible

What is the first book of the Bible? (Open-ended)

What are the names of the first four books of the New Testament, that is, the four Gospels? (Open-ended)

Where, according to the Bible, was Jesus born? Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth or Jericho?

Which of these is NOT in the Ten Commandments? Do unto others..., no adultery, no stealing, keep Sabbath?

Which figure is associated with remaining obedient to God despite suffering? Job, Elijah, Moses or Abraham?

Which figure is associated with leading the exodus from Egypt? Moses, Job, Elijah or Abraham?

Which figure is associated with willingness to sacrifice his son for God? Abraham, Job, Moses or Elijah?

Elements of Christianity

What is Catholic teaching about bread and wine in Communion? They become body and blood, or are symbols?

Which group traditionally teaches that salvation is through faith alone? Protestants, Catholics, both or neither?

Was Mother Teresa Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu or Mormon?

What is the name of the person whose writings and actions inspired the Reformation? Luther, Aquinas or Wesley?

Who was a preacher during the First Great Awakening? Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney or Billy Graham?

Elements of Judaism

When does the Jewish Sabbath begin? Friday, Saturday or Sunday?

Was Maimonides Jewish, Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu or Mormon?

Elements of Mormonism

When was the Mormon religion founded? After 1800, between 1200 and 1800, or before 1200 A.D.?

The Book of Mormon tells of Jesus appearing to people in what area? The Americas, Middle East or Asia?

Was Joseph Smith Mormon, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist or Hindu?

World Religions

Is Ramadan the Islamic holy month, the Hindu festival of lights or a Jewish day of atonement?

Do you happen to know the name of the holy book of Islam? (Open-ended)

Which religion aims at nirvana, the state of being free from suffering? Buddhism, Hinduism or Islam?

Is the Dalai Lama Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Catholic or Mormon?

In which religion are Vishnu and Shiva central figures? Hinduism, Islam or Taoism?

What is the religion of most people in India? Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim or Christian?

What is the religion of most people in Pakistan? Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or Christian?

What is the religion of most people in Indonesia? Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or Christian?

Who is the king of Gods in Greek mythology? Zeus, Mars or Apollo?

Atheism and Agnosticism

Is an atheist someone who does NOT believe in God, believes in God, or is unsure whether God exists?

Is an agnostic someone who is unsure whether God exists, does NOT believe in God, or believes in God?

Religion in Public Life

What does Constitution say about religion? Separation of church and state, emphasize Christianity, or nothing?

According to the Supreme Court, can a public school teacher lead a class in prayer?

According to the Supreme Court, can a public school teacher read from the Bible as an example of literature?

According to the Supreme Court, can a public school teacher offer a class comparing the world's religions?

The Bible

The survey includes seven questions about the Bible, tapping people's knowledge on five topics from the Old Testament (the name of the first book of the Bible, the Ten Commandments and the identities of Abraham, Job and Moses) and two topics from the New Testament (the names of the four Gospels and the birthplace of Jesus).

OLD TESTAMENT QUESTIONS

Nearly two-thirds of the public (63%) correctly name Genesis as the first book of the Bible when asked this question in an open-ended (not multiple-choice) format. More than eight-in-ten white evangelicals (85%), Mormons (85%) and black Protestants (83%) get this question right, as do roughly seven-in-ten atheists and agnostics (71%). By comparison, fewer than half of Catholics (42%), including 47% of white Catholics and 29% of Hispanic Catholics, are able to name Genesis as the first book of the Bible.

A slim majority of the public (55%) correctly says that the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," is *not* one of the Ten Commandments. More than eight-in-ten Mormons (81%) answer this question correctly, as do roughly two-thirds of white evangelicals (67%) and more than six-in-ten white Catholics (63%), atheists/agnostics (62%) and Jews (62%). By contrast, less than half of white mainline Protestants and black Protestants (49% each) get this question right.

Of the three Old Testament figures asked about in the survey, Americans are most familiar with Moses. Overall, more than seven-in-ten Americans (72%) know he was the biblical figure who led the exodus out of Egypt; 92% of Mormons and about as many Jews and atheists/agnostics answer this question correctly. Eight-in-ten white evangelicals correctly identify Moses, as do roughly three-quarters of black Protestants (73%) and about two-thirds of white mainline Protestants (68%) and Catholics (65%).

Compared with Moses, Abraham is less well-known, with 60% of all Americans correctly identifying him as the biblical figure who was willing to sacrifice his son's life for God. Fewer (39%) identify Job as the biblical figure known for remaining obedient to God despite extraordinary suffering.

Knowledge of the Bible

% who know...	Old Testament					New Testament		Avg. # correct out of 7
	First book in Bible	Golden Rule is NOT a Commandment	Religious figures			Birthplace of Jesus	Four Gospels	
	%	%	Moses	Abraham	Job	%	%	
Total	63	55	72	60	39	71	45	4.1
Christian	66	57	71	61	41	74	50	4.2
Protestant	76	56	74	63	48	78	57	4.5
White evangelical	85	67	80	69	58	83	71	5.1
White mainline	61	49	68	53	34	79	43	3.9
Black Protestant	83	49	73	61	51	70	50	4.4
Catholic	42	57	65	55	25	65	33	3.4
White Catholic	47	63	71	60	26	74	40	3.8
Hispanic Catholic	29	45	48	40	19	47	15	2.4
Mormon	85	81	92	87	70	83	73	5.7
Jewish	65	62	90	83	47	61	17	4.3
Unaffiliated	54	50	72	56	31	62	28	3.5
Atheist/Agnostic	71	62	87	68	42	70	39	4.4
Nothing in particular	48	46	67	52	27	59	24	3.2

Q39, Q40, Q41, Q46, Q47a-d

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

NEW TESTAMENT QUESTIONS

The New Testament questions inquire about the birthplace of Jesus and the names of the four Gospels. Most people (71%) know that, according to the Bible, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This includes majorities of nearly every religious group, though less than half of Hispanic Catholics (47%) answer this question correctly.

Slightly less than half of those polled (45%) can name all four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). An additional 6% correctly name between one and three of the Gospels in this open-ended (not multiple-choice) question. Mormons and white evangelical Protestants do best (73% and 71%, respectively, correctly name all four Gospels). For Jews, this is among the toughest questions in the survey – just 17% are able to name all four Gospels. Roughly four-in-ten atheists/agnostics (39%) correctly name all four Gospels.

OVERALL KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE

Overall, Mormons score best on these items, answering an average of 5.7 of the seven Bible questions correctly. White evangelical Protestants get about five of the seven Bible items right (5.1), while atheists and agnostics (4.4), black Protestants (4.4) and Jews (4.3) answer more than four of these questions correctly. (Jews, not surprisingly, know more about the Hebrew Scriptures, or Old Testament, than about the New Testament; 35% of Jews answer all five Old Testament questions correctly, while only 14% answer both New Testament questions correctly.) White mainline Protestants and Catholics answer an average of fewer than four Bible questions correctly (3.9 and 3.4, respectively). White Catholics score significantly higher than Latino Catholics on these items (3.8 correct on average among white Catholics vs. 2.4 correct among Latino Catholics).

Elements of Christianity

In addition to the Bible questions, the survey contains five items about elements of Christianity, including one question about the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (the belief that during Communion, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus), one about the traditional Protestant teaching that salvation comes through faith alone, and three about major Christian figures (Mother Teresa, Martin Luther and Jonathan Edwards).

Knowledge of Christianity

% who know...	Catholicism and Protestantism		Religious figures			Avg. # correct out of 12*
	Catholics teach bread/wine become body/blood	Protestants teach salvation through faith alone	Mother Teresa was Catholic	Martin Luther inspired Reformation	Jonathan Edwards participated in First Great Awakening	
	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	40	16	82	46	11	6.0
Christian	41	16	83	46	11	6.2
Protestant	35	19	81	47	13	6.5
White evangelical	40	28	86	52	15	7.3
White mainline	36	14	83	46	10	5.8
Black Protestant	25	9	66	40	10	5.9
Catholic	55	9	87	42	8	5.4
White Catholic	59	9	88	47	7	5.9
Hispanic Catholic	47	8	83	34	10	4.2
Mormon	40	22	89	61	10	7.9
Jewish	33	10	84	70	12	6.3
Unaffiliated	32	13	80	45	10	5.3
Atheist/Agnostic	41	22	89	68	8	6.7
Nothing in particular	30	10	77	37	10	4.9

*Average number correct is out of a total of 12 items about Christianity, including the seven Bible items described previously and the five questions about other elements of Christianity described here.

Q44, Q45, Q48a, Q60, Q63

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

About half of those polled (52%) say, incorrectly, that Catholicism teaches that the bread and wine used for Communion are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus. Just four-in-ten people correctly answer that, according to the Catholic Church, the bread and wine *actually become* the body and blood of Jesus. Even many Catholics are unaware of their church's teaching on this topic; while 55% of Catholics get the question right, more than four-in-ten Catholics (41%) say the church teaches that the bread and wine are symbols of Christ's body and blood, and 3% say they do not know what the church's teaching is. Still, Catholics perform better on this question than does any other religious group.⁵

Fewer than one-in-five people (16%) correctly identify Protestantism as the faith that traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone. Most people get this question wrong: 9% say this teaching is traditionally associated with Catholicism, 38% say it is traditionally associated with both Protestantism and Catholicism, 10% say it is not normally associated with either faith and more than a quarter (27%) say they do not know the answer. White evangelicals (28% correct), Mormons (22%) and atheists/agnostics (22%) perform better than other groups on this question. However, even among these groups, many more people get the answer wrong than get it right.⁶

The survey finds great variation in awareness of three prominent figures in Christianity. Eight-in-ten Americans (82%) know that Mother Teresa (1910-1997) was Catholic, including nearly nine-in-ten Catholics, who do better on this question than on any other religious knowledge question except prayer in public schools.

Just 46% of those polled correctly identify Martin Luther (1483-1546) as the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant reformation. Familiarity with Martin Luther is highest among Jews (70%), atheists/agnostics (68%) and Mormons (61%). About half of all Protestants (47%) answer this question correctly.

Finally, there is little public awareness of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), viewed by many scholars as the greatest theologian in American history. Only about one-in-ten

⁵ The centrality of this teaching was emphasized by Pope John Paul II in his 2003 encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, which cited "the perennially valid teaching of the Council of Trent: 'the consecration of the bread and wine effects the change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. And the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called this change transubstantiation.'" http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0821/_P3.HTM (ch. 1, section 15).

⁶ This doctrine, known by the Latin phrase *sola fide* (by faith alone), is one of the key theological differences between most Protestant denominations and the Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Churches. It is summed up in Article IV of the 1530 Augsburg Confession, which states that "men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith..." <http://bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php> .

people surveyed (11%) are able to identify him as a preacher during the First Great Awakening of the Colonial era. Nearly three-in-ten people (28%) incorrectly name Billy Graham as a preacher who was active during the First Great Awakening, 10% incorrectly name Charles Finney, and fully half of those polled say they do not know which of these three men was active during the First Great Awakening.

Combining these five items on elements of Christianity with the seven questions about the Bible into a single scale makes it possible to compare religious groups' overall knowledge of Christianity. Mormons score best on this scale, getting an average of 7.9 of the 12 questions about Christianity right. They are followed by white evangelical Protestants, who average 7.3 questions right. Atheists/agnostics (6.7) and Jews (6.3) get more than six of the 12 questions about Christianity right. Black Protestants (5.9), white Catholics (5.9) and white mainline Protestants (5.8) get roughly half of the questions about Christianity correct. Those who say their religion is "nothing in particular" (4.9) and Hispanic Catholics (4.2) answer fewer than five of these 12 questions correctly.

Elements of Judaism

In addition to the five items about the Old Testament, the survey includes two other questions about elements of Judaism – the Sabbath and the identity of Maimonides. Overall, 45% of those polled correctly identify Friday as the day on which the Jewish Sabbath begins. Three-in-ten say the Jewish Sabbath begins on Saturday, which actually is the day it ends, while

7% select Sunday, and the rest say they do not know when the Jewish Sabbath begins.

Among Jews, 94% get this question right. Most atheists/agnostics (56%) and Mormons (55%) in the survey also answer this question correctly, while most people in other religious groups do not know when the Jewish Sabbath begins.

Fewer than one-in-ten adults (8%) know that Maimonides was

Jewish. Jews answer this question correctly at much higher rates

than the general public, with 57% getting it right. But there is considerable confusion about Maimonides' identity even among Jews, with 13% selecting an incorrect answer to the question and 30% saying they do not know. One-in-five atheists/agnostics (19%) know Maimonides was Jewish; no more than one-in-ten people in any other religious group get this question right.

Jews on average correctly answer five of the seven questions pertaining to Judaism (the five Old Testament questions discussed previously and the two questions discussed here). Mormons also do well on these questions (4.8 correct on average), though many

Knowledge of Judaism

<i>% who know...</i>	Sabbath begins on Friday	Maimonides was Jewish	Avg. # correct out of 7*
Total	45%	8%	3.4
Christian	43	6	3.5
Protestant	43	6	3.7
White evangelical	47	5	4.1
White mainline	41	8	3.1
Black Protestant	43	3	3.6
Catholic	43	8	2.9
White Catholic	48	8	3.2
Hispanic Catholic	33	8	2.2
Mormon	55	9	4.8
Jewish	94	57	5.0
Unaffiliated	47	12	3.2
Atheist/Agnostic	56	19	4.0
Nothing in particular	45	10	2.9

*Average number correct is out of a total of seven items about Judaism, including the five Old Testament questions described previously and the two questions about other elements of Judaism described here.

Q15, Q48d

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
May 19-June 6, 2010

more Jews than Mormons get all seven questions right (29% among Jews, 6% among Mormons). White evangelical Protestants and atheists/agnostics each answer about four of these questions correctly. Black Protestants get slightly more than half of these items right on average (3.6), putting them ahead of white Catholics (3.2) and white mainline Protestants (3.1).

Elements of Mormonism

The survey includes three questions about Mormonism. Overall, 51% of Americans identify Joseph Smith, founder of the Latter-day Saints, as a Mormon, and 44% know that Mormonism was founded after 1800. Four-in-ten know that according to the Book of Mormon, Jesus appeared to followers in the Americas.

Mormons clearly know more about their own faith than others do about Mormonism. On average, Mormons get 2.7 of the three questions right, with eight-in-ten Mormons (81%) answering all three questions correctly. Atheists/agnostics (2.1) and Jews (1.9) each get an average of roughly two of these questions right, with members of other religious groups exhibiting significantly lower levels of knowledge about Mormonism.

Knowledge of Mormonism

<i>% who know...</i>	When the Mormon religion was founded	Where Jesus appeared to people, according to the Book of Mormon	Joseph Smith was Mormon	Avg. # correct out of 3
Total	44%	40%	51%	1.4
Christian	42	38	51	1.3
Protestant	41	38	53	1.3
White evangelical	48	44	64	1.6
White mainline	43	42	55	1.4
Black Protestant	25	18	25	0.7
Catholic	40	34	44	1.2
White Catholic	40	38	53	1.3
Hispanic Catholic	38	24	25	0.9
Mormon	88	90	93	2.7
Jewish	61	55	68	1.9
Unaffiliated	51	48	52	1.5
Atheist/Agnostic	70	65	71	2.1
Nothing in particular	45	42	45	1.3

Q42, Q43, Q48c

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

World Religions

The survey includes 11 questions about world religions other than Christianity. These consist of the questions about the Jewish Sabbath and Maimonides described previously, as well as two questions about Islam (about Ramadan and the Koran), two questions about Buddhism (about nirvana and the Dalai Lama), one question about Hinduism (recognition of Vishnu and Shiva as Hindu deities), one question about ancient Greek mythology, and three questions about the religious make-up of large, geopolitically important countries (India, Pakistan and Indonesia).

Among all Americans, 54% correctly name the Koran as the holy book of Islam, and 52% know that Ramadan is the Islamic holy month. Knowledge of these elements of Islam is highest among Jews (77% get both of these questions right) and atheists/agnostics (69% get both right). The survey does not include enough interviews with Muslim respondents to permit reliable analysis of their religious knowledge.

About half of those polled (47%) correctly identify the Dalai Lama's religion as Buddhism. This includes roughly three-quarters of atheists/agnostics (74%) and Jews (74%) who know the Dalai Lama's faith. Fewer people (36%) identify Buddhism as the religion that aims at nirvana, the state of being free from suffering. A similar proportion (38%) correctly name Hinduism as the faith with which the deities Vishnu and Shiva are associated. As is the case with Muslims, however, the survey does not include enough interviews with Buddhist or Hindu respondents to permit reliable analysis of their religious knowledge.

About two-thirds of Americans (68%) know that most people in Pakistan consider themselves to be Muslim, while 62% know that most people in India consider themselves to be Hindu. Far fewer (27%) are aware that most Indonesians are Muslim.

In total, Jews and atheists/agnostics do far better on these questions about elements of world religions than do members of any other group. On average, Jews answer 7.9 of these 11 questions correctly, while atheists and agnostics answer 7.5 correctly. Mormons also score better than the public overall, getting 5.6 questions right, and those whose religion is nothing in particular get 5.4 right on average. White Catholics, white evangelicals and white mainline Protestants all get about five of these questions right on average, while black Protestants and Hispanic Catholics each get slightly fewer than four of these items correct.

Knowledge of World Religions

% who know...	Islam		Buddhism		Other		Majority religion in...			Avg. # correct out of 11*
	Ramadan %	Koran %	Nirvana %	Dalai Lama %	Vishnu and Shiva %	Zeus %	India %	Pakistan %	Indonesia %	
Total	52	54	36	47	38	65	62	68	27	5.0
Christian	49	50	33	45	33	62	59	65	24	4.7
Protestant	48	52	31	42	33	61	59	65	25	4.6
White evangelical	51	54	29	43	31	62	66	69	27	4.8
White mainline	53	54	36	46	40	67	59	63	27	4.9
Black Protestant	39	50	21	33	23	47	49	61	19	3.9
Catholic	50	44	36	49	32	62	55	64	23	4.7
White Catholic	55	51	39	52	34	67	60	68	24	5.1
Hispanic Catholic	36	23	27	41	23	50	45	55	19	3.6
Mormon	51	61	37	50	48	80	69	75	28	5.6
Jewish	90	80	49	74	62	73	78	84	53	7.9
Unaffiliated	58	65	50	54	54	76	71	76	33	6.0
Atheist/Agnostic	75	86	62	74	72	90	84	89	44	7.5
Nothing in particular	52	57	46	47	48	72	67	72	29	5.4

*Average number correct is out of a total of 11 items about world religions, including the questions about the Jewish Sabbath and Maimonides described previously and the nine items described here.

Q17, Q35, Q36, Q37a-b, Q48b, Q55a-d

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Atheism and Agnosticism

Among the public as a whole, 85% know that an atheist is someone who does not believe in God. This includes 94% of self-described atheists and agnostics as well as similarly large numbers of white evangelical Protestants (94%). Roughly nine-in-ten Mormons (92%), Jews (91%), white mainline Protestants and white Catholics (88% each) also know what the term “atheist” means.

Roughly eight-in-ten black Protestants (79%) are able to define the term “atheist.” Among Hispanic Catholics, about six-in-ten (61%) get this question right.

Fewer people know the definition of an agnostic than the definition of an atheist. Overall, 62% correctly say that an agnostic is someone who is unsure whether God exists; 12% incorrectly say an agnostic is someone who does not believe in God, 5% say an agnostic is someone who does believe in God and 22% volunteer that they do not know the answer. Among atheists and agnostics, 86% get this question right, as do roughly three-in-four Jews (76%) and Mormons (73%). About six-in-ten white evangelical Protestants (64%), white mainline Protestants (63%), white Catholics (60%) and those whose religion is nothing in particular (60%) know what an agnostic is, as do about half of Hispanic Catholics (53%) and black Protestants (49%).

In total, about six-in-ten people (58%) get *both* of these questions right.

Atheism and Agnosticism

<i>% who know...</i>	What an atheist is	What an agnostic is
Total	85%	62%
Christian	85	60
Protestant	88	61
White evangelical	94	64
White mainline	88	63
Black Protestant	79	49
Catholic	79	57
White Catholic	88	60
Hispanic Catholic	61	53
Mormon	92	73
Jewish	91	76
Unaffiliated	85	67
Atheist/Agnostic	94	86
Nothing in particular	82	60

Q38a-b

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

The Role of Religion in Public Life

Across the board, majorities of those surveyed – including seven-in-ten people in many religious groups – know that the Constitution says the government shall neither establish an official religion nor interfere with the free exercise of religion. But the survey also shows that large numbers *think* the Constitution, as interpreted in Supreme Court rulings in recent decades, places tighter reins on religious education in public schools than it actually does.

Knowledge of Religion's Role in Public Life

% who know...	What Constitution says about religion and government	According to rulings by the Supreme Court, a public school teacher...			Avg. # correct out of 4
		Cannot lead a class in prayer	Can teach a class comparing world religions	Can read from Bible as an example of literature	
Total	68%	89%	36%	23%	2.2
Christian	68	89	34	21	2.1
Protestant	68	89	33	22	2.1
White evangelical	73	93	39	26	2.3
White mainline	74	90	37	21	2.2
Black Protestant	53	83	23	16	1.7
Catholic	66	89	33	18	2.1
White Catholic	72	91	37	18	2.2
Hispanic Catholic	53	83	21	16	1.7
Mormon	78	89	44	25	2.3
Jewish	77	91	60	42	2.7
Unaffiliated	70	89	43	28	2.3
Atheist/Agnostic	82	95	62	40	2.8
Nothing in particular	66	87	37	25	2.1

Q49, Q50a-c

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Nearly nine-in-ten people (89%) correctly say that Supreme Court rulings prohibit public school teachers from leading a class in prayer. At least eight-in-ten members of all religious groups correctly answer this question. But two-thirds of those polled (67%) also think that public school teachers are prohibited from reading from the Bible as an example of literature. Only 23% correctly say that reading from the Bible as an example of literature is permitted. More than half of those surveyed (51%) say that public school teachers are prohibited from offering a class comparing the world's religions, while 36% know that offering courses in comparative religion is permitted.

Atheists/agnostics and Jews perform better than other groups on questions related to the role of religion in public life. On average, atheists and agnostics get 2.8 of these four questions right, and Jews get 2.7 right. Mormons and white evangelicals average 2.3 correct answers and white mainline Protestants and white Catholics 2.2 each. Black Protestants and Hispanic Catholics give an average of fewer than two correct answers (1.7 for each group) to the survey's four questions about religion in public life.

NonReligious Knowledge

For comparison purposes, the survey also includes nine questions about knowledge of topics other than religion. These consist of two questions about politics (the name of the vice president of the United States and which political party currently holds a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives), three questions about science (one each about antibiotics, lasers and Charles Darwin) and four questions about historical or literary topics (Susan B. Anthony, the New Deal, Herman Melville and the Scopes trial). Overall, 60% of those surveyed get more than half of the general knowledge questions right, compared with 52% who get half or more of the religion questions right. This does not mean, however, that Americans have greater general knowledge than religious knowledge; it could simply be that the general knowledge questions on the survey were easier than the religious knowledge questions.

In the political domain, roughly seven-in-ten people (72%) know that Democrats currently have a majority in the House of Representatives. Six-in-ten (59%) correctly name Joe Biden as the vice president in an open-ended (not multiple-choice) question. More people (69%) were able to identify Dick Cheney as the vice president in a 2007 Pew Research Center survey, but at the time Cheney had been in office six years, compared with about a year and a half for Biden when this survey was conducted.

Knowledge of Other Topics

% who know...	Politics		Science			History and Literature				Avg. # correct out of 9
	Party in power %	Vice Pres. %	Lasers %	Antibiotics %	Darwin %	Susan B. Anthony %	FDR/New Deal %	<i>Moby Dick</i> %	Scopes trial %	
Total	72	59	60	59	71	72	57	42	31	5.2
Christian	71	58	57	58	68	72	54	39	28	5.0
Protestant	71	57	56	58	70	72	54	38	28	5.0
White evangelical	79	62	55	65	77	75	61	43	29	5.5
White mainline	74	64	60	70	75	77	63	48	34	5.6
Black Protestant	57	52	43	32	49	68	36	21	21	3.8
Catholic	72	57	59	56	62	71	54	40	27	5.0
White Catholic	78	65	60	61	71	78	66	49	31	5.6
Hispanic Catholic	57	35	54	43	41	57	29	21	16	3.5
Mormon	81	66	66	77	82	79	65	50	31	6.0
Jewish	88	78	73	73	90	83	86	72	66	7.1
Unaffiliated	74	62	72	64	81	76	65	50	38	5.8
Atheist/Agnostic	86	83	82	73	96	87	84	72	59	7.2
Nothing in particular	69	55	68	61	75	72	59	43	31	5.3

Q4-11, Q61-62

All three scientific knowledge questions were answered correctly by large majorities of those polled. Seven-in-ten (71%) know that Charles Darwin (not Sigmund Freud or Clarence Darrow) developed the theory of evolution by natural selection. In true-or-false questions, 60% correctly say it is false that lasers work by focusing sound waves, and 59% know it is false that antibiotics will kill viruses as well as bacteria.

Nearly three-quarters of Americans (72%) identify Susan B. Anthony as a leader of the women's suffrage movement (and not the abolitionist or prohibitionist movements). And nearly six-in-ten (57%) correctly name the New Deal (not the Square Deal or the Great Society) as the series of government programs passed while Franklin D. Roosevelt was president. Fewer people are able to identify the author of the novel *Moby Dick* (42% know it is Herman Melville, while 18% think it is Nathaniel Hawthorne, 4% say Stephen King, 2% say Edith Wharton and 33% say they do not know). And only about one-third of those polled know which famous court trial dealt with whether evolution could be taught in public schools; 31% know this was the Scopes trial, while 36% say it was *Brown vs. Board of Education* and 3% name the Salem witch trials.

Atheists/agnostics (7.2 out of nine correct on average) and Jews (7.1) perform best on these general knowledge items. Mormons answer six of these questions correctly on average. White Catholics and white mainline Protestants each give an average of 5.6 correct answers to these questions, while white evangelicals get 5.5 correct and those whose religion is nothing in particular answer 5.3 correctly. Black Protestants (3.8) and Hispanic Catholics (3.5) each get fewer than four of these nine questions right on average.

Overall, those who perform well on the religious knowledge questions also score well on the general knowledge questions, while those who score poorly on religious knowledge questions also answer relatively few general knowledge questions correctly. Most people either get more than half of the questions in both domains of knowledge right (41%), or less than half in both domains right (35%). About one-in-five people (19%) answer more than half of the general knowledge questions correctly while answering less than half of the religious knowledge questions accurately, while only 6% get most religious knowledge questions right and most general knowledge questions wrong.

Comparison of Performance on General and Religious Knowledge Items

% of respondents who answered more than half (17-32) of the religion questions correctly and...

More than half (5-9) of the general knowledge questions correctly 41%
Less than half (0-4) of the general knowledge questions correctly 6

% of respondents who answered half or fewer (0-16) of the religion questions correctly and...

Less than half (0-4) of the general knowledge questions correctly 35
More than half (5-9) of the general knowledge questions correctly 19

100

Numbers in this report may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Factors Linked With Religious Knowledge

Most of the preceding discussion focused on differences in religious knowledge among members of different religious groups. But what other religious and demographic factors are linked with differences in religious knowledge? The survey shows that religious knowledge is most closely linked with years of schooling. In addition, a variety of religious traits – including overall levels of religious commitment and frequency of reading religious materials – help to explain differences in religious knowledge. Among demographic groups, men perform better than women, whites do better than blacks and Hispanics, and people who live in the East, Midwest and West score better than people in the South.

This final section of the report begins by examining differences in knowledge about religion first by education, then by religious traits and finally by other demographic and political traits besides education. It concludes with an analysis of the relative strength of the impact of each of these factors on religious knowledge while holding the other factors constant.

Education Drives Knowledge

The survey results are clear: People with higher levels of education tend to be more knowledgeable about religion. College graduates get an average of 20.6 out of 32 religious knowledge questions right. Within this group, people who have a post-graduate degree (such as a master's degree, doctorate, medical degree or law degree) do even better, averaging 22.2 out of 32 questions correct, with 30% falling in the top 10% of all respondents (answering 26 or more questions correctly). Those with bachelor's degrees get roughly 20 questions right on average.

Scores are significantly lower among respondents with less education. Among people who have some college experience (but no degree), the average number of correct answers is 17.5. Those whose formal education ended with a high school diploma get 13.7 questions right on average. At the low end of the education spectrum, people

More Educated More Knowledgeable

Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32

		<u>N</u>
Total	16.0	3,412
College graduates	20.6	1,233
Post-grad degree	22.2	476
Undergrad degree	19.8	757
Some college	17.5	803
High school or less	12.8	1,353
Completed HS	13.7	1,047
Less than HS	10.7	306

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
May 19-June 6, 2010

EMBARGOED COPY – NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL 12:01 a.m. EDT, SEPT. 28, 2010

who did not complete high school give an average of 10.7 correct answers on religious knowledge questions, roughly half as many as those with post-graduate degrees.

In addition to asking about overall levels of education, the survey includes several questions about religious education specifically. One such question asks whether people have ever taken a college-level religion course. Those who say they have taken a religion course get 22.1 questions right on average, compared with 17.9 for those who have at least some college education but who have not taken a religion course at that level, and 12.8 for those who have not been to college.

The survey also asks respondents whether they attended public, private religious or private nonreligious schools in their childhood. Those who attended private school score better than those who attended public school by more than two questions on average. However, there is no significant difference between those who attended private religious schools (17.8 questions right on average) and those who attended nonreligious private schools (18.5 questions right on average). Those who went to public schools get an average of 15.5 questions right.

Those who say they regularly attended (at least once a week) religious education classes or participated in religious youth groups as children get an average of 16.6 questions right. Those who participated in religious education and youth groups more sporadically (monthly or yearly) get fewer questions right (15.9 on average), while those who say they seldom or never participated in these activities answer the lowest number of questions correctly (14.3).

The Impact of Religious Education

Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32

		<u>N</u>
Total	16.0	3,412
Took religion course in college?		
Yes	22.1	673
No (but went to college)	17.9	1,361
Did not go to college	12.8	1,353
Type of schooling*		
Private religious	17.8	578
Private nonreligious	18.5	103
Public	15.5	2,710
Participation in childhood religious education/ youth groups		
At least once a week	16.6	2,293
Monthly or yearly	15.9	509
Seldom or never	14.3	577

*Private school categories include those who say they attended private school as well as those who say they attended both private and public school. The private religious category includes those who say they attended a religious school as well as those who say they attended both a religious and nonreligious private school.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
May 19-June 6, 2010

Religious Traits and Religious Knowledge

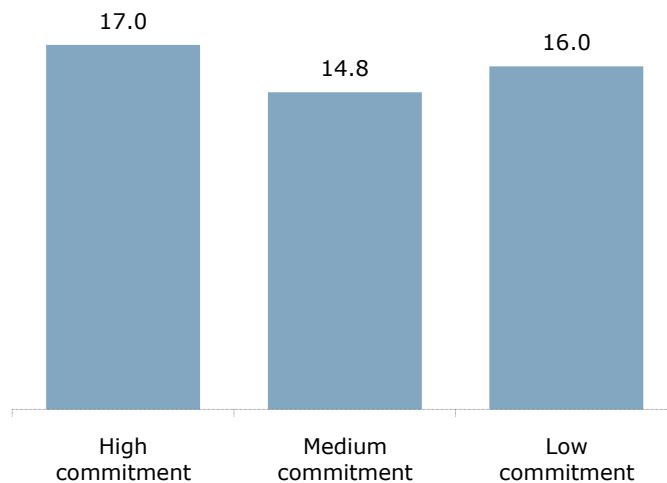
In this study, a person's degree of religious commitment is measured by combining two questions, one asking about the importance of religion in the person's life and the other asking how often the person attends worship services. Religious commitment has a complicated relationship with religious knowledge. People with a high level of religious commitment – those who describe religion as “very important” in their lives and who say they attend worship services at least once a week – answer 17 of the 32 religious knowledge questions correctly on average. People with a low level of religious commitment perform at the national norm, answering an average of 16 questions correctly. But, interestingly, people with a medium level of religious commitment get fewer questions right (14.8 on average) than people with either high or low commitment.

Moreover, statistical analyses that look simultaneously at different factors in religious knowledge reveal that the most pronounced differences are between people with the highest levels of religious commitment and everyone else. In other words, once education, religious affiliation and other factors are controlled for, differences in religious knowledge between those with low and medium levels of religious commitment mostly go away. But people with a high level of religious commitment continue to display higher religious knowledge, even when other factors are held equal.

The same analyses also show that the strength of the link

Religious Commitment and Religious Knowledge

Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32



The religious commitment scale combines measures of attendance at religious services (Q.ATTEND) and of the importance of religion in people's lives (Q.25). Those who attend services at least once a week and say religion is very important in their lives are in the high commitment category. The low commitment category is made up primarily of those who never attend services, say religion is not too or not at all important to them, or say religion is somewhat important and attend services a few times a year or less. Others are in the medium category.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
May 19-June 6, 2010

between religious commitment and religious knowledge depends on the particular domain of knowledge. On questions about the Bible, for instance, there is a simple, straightforward relationship – people with high levels of religious commitment get more questions right, while those with lower levels of commitment get fewer questions right. But on questions related to world religions, there are no significant differences associated with religious commitment.

The survey shows that reading and talking about religion are related to higher levels of religious knowledge. People who say they read Scripture at least once a week, for instance, get significantly more questions right on average than those who read Scripture less often. The same pattern is seen in frequency of reading books (besides Scripture) about one's own faith. People who are affiliated with a religion and read books about their faith at least once a week get an average of 18 (out of 32) questions right, compared with 14.5 for those who say they seldom or never read books (other than Scripture) about their faith. Similarly, reading books at least occasionally about religions other than one's own is linked with higher levels of religious knowledge compared with those who seldom or never read about other faiths. And people who say they frequently discuss religion with their family and friends get an average of 16.9 questions correct, which is significantly higher than the number answered correctly by people who discuss religion less often.

Impact of Reading and Talking About Religion

<i>Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32</i>		Sample size
Total	16.0	3,412
Frequency of Scripture reading		
At least once a week	16.8	1,291
Monthly or yearly	15.7	788
Seldom or never	15.6	1,307
Read books/websites about own religion*		
At least once a week	18.0	682
Monthly or yearly	16.9	843
Seldom or never	14.5	1,312
Read books/websites about other religions**		
At least once a week	18.1	213
Monthly or yearly	19.0	824
Seldom or never	14.9	2,337
Talk with family/friends about religion		
Frequently	16.9	1,491
Occasionally	16.0	991
Rarely or never	14.7	918

*Based on respondents who are affiliated with a religion

**Combines responses to Q34c for those affiliated with a religion ("How often do you read books or visit websites about other religions") and Q34d for those unaffiliated with a religion ("How often do you read other books [besides Scripture] or visit websites about religion").

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Beliefs about God and the Bible are also associated with religious knowledge. People who say they do not believe in God or a universal spirit perform relatively well on the survey, getting an average of 18.7 questions right. By comparison, those who believe in God get significantly fewer questions right (those who say they believe in God with absolute certainty get an average of 16 questions right, while those who say they believe in God but are not absolutely certain about God's existence get 15.3 right). This is consistent with the survey's finding that people who describe themselves (in response to a separate question) as atheists and agnostics score better overall than people affiliated with many religious faiths.

In general, people who say they do not believe that the Bible is the word of God score higher on the survey than do those who do view the Bible as the word of God. Respondents who say the Bible was written by man and is *not* the word of God get 18 questions right, on average. Those who say the Bible is the word of God but should not be taken literally get an average of 16.3 questions right. And those who say the Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally, word for word, get an average of 14.5 questions right.

Belief in God and Views of Scripture

<i>Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32</i>		Sample size
Total	16.0	3,412
Belief in God		
Absolutely certain	16.0	2,295
Yes, but less certain	15.3	793
No, do not believe	18.7	233
Views of Bible/Scripture		
Literal word of God	14.5	1,084
Word of God, not literal	16.3	1,066
Not word of God	18.0	1,034

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

People who have switched religions since childhood⁷ score better on the survey (16.9 questions right on average) than people who hold the same faith now as they did when they were growing up (15.7 questions right on average). People who are married to someone from a different faith get 17 questions right on average, while those who are married to someone who shares their faith get 16.5 questions right on average.

Impact of Religious Switching and Interreligious Marriages

<i>Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32</i>		Sample size
Total	16.0	3,412
Switched religion since childhood?		
Switched religion since childhood	16.9	949
Same religion as childhood	15.7	2,450
Spouse same religion as you?*		
Same religion as spouse	16.5	1,508
Different religion than spouse	17.0	434

*Based on respondents who are married or living with a partner.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

⁷ Switching was determined by asking respondents their present religion and the religion in which they were raised as a child, then comparing the two.

Demographics, Politics and Religious Knowledge

A number of demographic characteristics are closely correlated with levels of religious knowledge. Whites, for instance, score higher than both blacks and Hispanics. Whites get an average of 17 questions right, compared with 13.8 for blacks and 13.3 for Hispanics.

Consistent with this, those who were born in the United States generally score higher (16.3 questions right) than those who were born abroad (13.8).

Men get more questions right on average than women (16.7 vs. 15.3). People living in regions other than the South get more questions right on average than people living in the South (16.8 right for people living in the West, 16.3 in the East, 16.2 in the Midwest and 15.4 in the South). And those in the middle age groups (ages 30-64) get more questions right than the oldest adults (those 65 and older). Those age 18-29 get fewer questions right than those age 30-49, but are not significantly different compared with those age 50 and older.

Demographic Differences in Religious Knowledge

Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32

		Sample size
Total	16.0	3,412
Race and ethnicity		
White	17.0	2,518
Black	13.8	261
Hispanic	13.3	248
Born in U.S.?		
Yes	16.3	3,131
No	13.8	267
Gender		
Male	16.7	1,590
Female	15.3	1,822
Region		
East	16.3	649
Midwest	16.2	790
South	15.4	1,181
West	16.8	789
Age		
18-29	15.6	556
30-49	16.4	915
50-64	16.2	983
65 and older	15.3	894

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

People who have not had a child score significantly higher on the survey than parents do – an average of 17.2 questions right for those who have not had children vs. 15.5 for those who have had children. (A similar pattern is seen on the general knowledge questions.)

People who are married or living with a partner tend to score higher than those who are single (16.6 questions right vs. 15.2). However, this apparent difference is actually a function of differing levels of education and other religious and demographic characteristics; once these other factors are controlled for, there is no significant difference in the religious knowledge levels of married people and those who are single.

Politically, Republicans (17.5 questions right, on average) score significantly higher than Democrats (15.9) and independents (15.7). But here again, these apparent differences actually have a lot to do with other traits; once education, religious affiliation and other factors are taken into account, Democrats actually perform somewhat better than Republicans. Similarly, people who describe themselves as liberals answer about the same number of questions correctly as self-described conservatives (16.7 on average for liberals, 16.6 for conservatives). However, as will be described in more detail in the next section, once other factors are taken into account, liberals show slightly higher religious knowledge than conservatives do.

Marriage, Children and Religious Knowledge

	<i>Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32</i>	Sample size
Total	16.0	3,412
Never had children	17.2	911
Have had children	15.5	2,461
Married or living with partner	16.6	1,946
Not married or partnered	15.2	1,446

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Political Ideology and Party Affiliation

	<i>Average # of questions answered correctly out of 32</i>	Sample size
Total	16.0	3,412
Party affiliation		
Republican	17.5	940
Independent	15.7	1,118
Democrat	15.9	1,100
Political ideology		
Conservative	16.6	1,341
Moderate	16.2	1,084
Liberal	16.7	764

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Assessing the Relative Impact of Religious and Demographic Factors on Religious Knowledge

The results of the survey suggest that there are many traits that seem to be linked with levels of religious knowledge – including demographic factors, such as age and race, as well as religious factors, such as religious affiliation and reading about religion. But which of these traits are strongly related to greater knowledge, and which are related only tangentially, if at all? The remainder of the report attempts to answer this question, based on a technique known as multiple regression analysis.

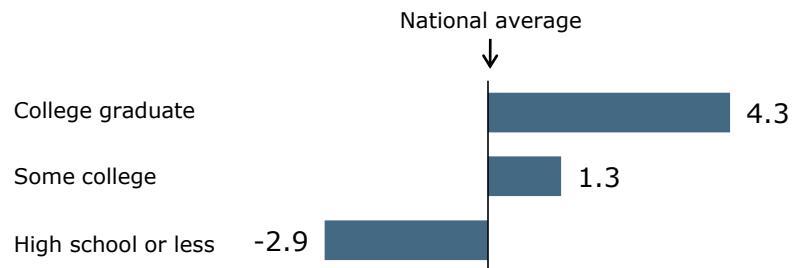
The multiple regression analysis begins with a statistical model that includes seven main variables: religious affiliation, religious commitment, education level, race, gender, age and geographic region. It considers the impact of each of those variables, one at a time, holding the other six constant. Then the analysis holds all seven of the main variables constant and adds into the model, one by one, a number of other possible factors in religious knowledge, such as frequency of Scripture reading, interfaith marriage and belief in biblical literalism. This produces a picture of how much each factor contributes to religious knowledge independent of the other variables. Put somewhat differently, this method of analysis imagines a survey respondent who is completely typical in all ways but one and calculates the impact of that one factor on the respondent's level of religious knowledge.

EMBARGOED COPY – NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL 12:01 a.m. EDT, SEPT. 28, 2010

These analyses confirm that educational attainment is far and away the single leading predictor of higher religious knowledge. Having a college degree is associated with an additional 4.3 correct answers (above the national average) even after religious affiliation and other demographic characteristics are taken into account. By comparison, having a high school education or less is linked with 2.9 fewer correct answers. Thus, with all else held equal, having a college degree makes a difference of 7.2 additional correct answers (out of 32 possible on this survey) compared with someone with a high school education or less.

Education's Impact, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors

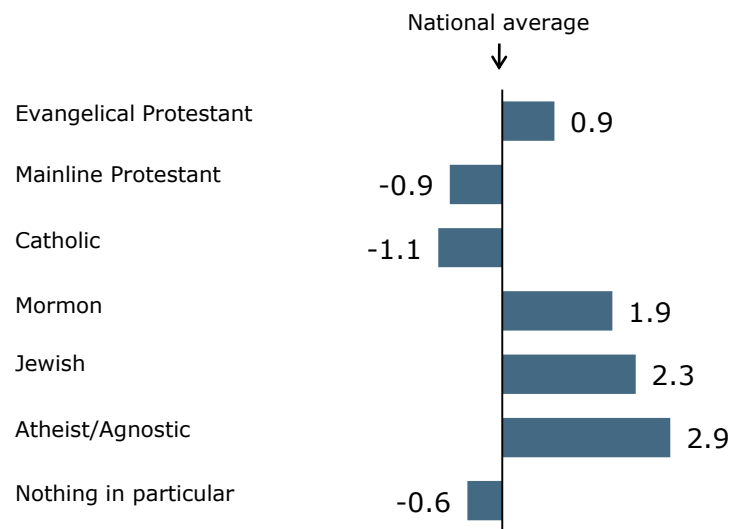


PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
May 19-June 6, 2010

Religious affiliation also remains a good predictor of religious knowledge in these models. Even after education, race and other factors are taken into account, atheists/agnostics, Jews and Mormons perform better than other religious groups on this survey. Atheists and agnostics get an additional 2.9 questions correct compared with the national average, Jews do 2.3 questions better than average and Mormons get 1.9 more questions right over the national average. Atheists/agnostics, Jews and Mormons are followed by evangelicals, who do 0.9 questions better compared with the national average. By contrast, mainline Protestants, Catholics and those whose religion is nothing in particular trail other groups even after demographic factors are taken into account.

Impact of Religious Affiliation, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors



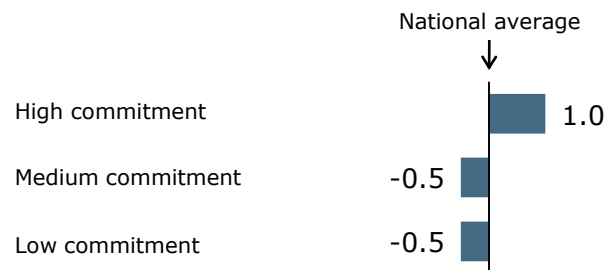
PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

EMBARGOED COPY – NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL 12:01 a.m. EDT, SEPT. 28, 2010

Holding other factors constant, people with high religious commitment – those who attend worship services frequently and consider religion to be very important in their lives – get one additional question correct (compared with the national average). By comparison, those with medium and low levels of religious commitment each get 0.5 fewer correct answers.

Religious Commitment, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors



The religious commitment scale combines measures of attendance at religious services (Q.ATTEND) and of the importance of religion in people's lives (Q.25). Those who attend services at least once a week and say religion is very important in their lives are in the high commitment category. The low commitment category is made up primarily of those who never attend services, say religion is not too or not at all important to them, or say religion is somewhat important and attend services a few times a year or less. Others are in the medium category.

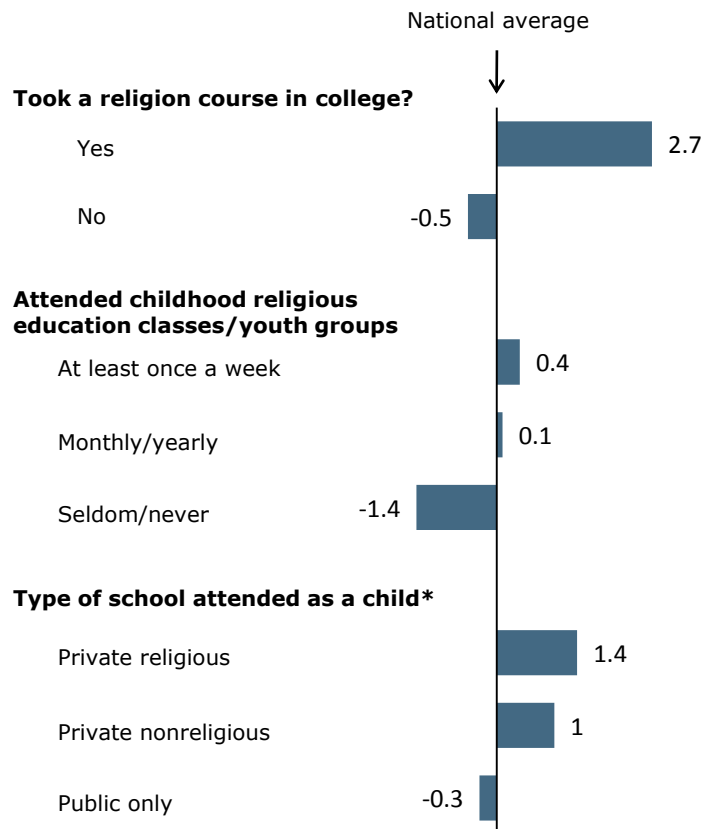
PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
May 19-June 6, 2010

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

People who took a religion course in college answer about three more questions correctly (out of 32) than those who have not taken a college-level religion course, even after controlling for overall levels of educational attainment. People who attended religious education classes or participated in religious youth groups at least once a week growing up get nearly two additional questions right, compared with those who did so seldom or never. Those who attended private religious schools as a child get an extra 1.7 questions right, compared with those who attended public school. However, there is no statistically significant difference in the scores of those who attended private religious schools and those who attended private nonreligious schools.

Religious Education, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors



*Private school categories include those who say they attended private school as well as those who say they attended both private and public school. The private religious category includes those who say they attended a religious school as well as those who say they attended both a religious and nonreligious private school.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

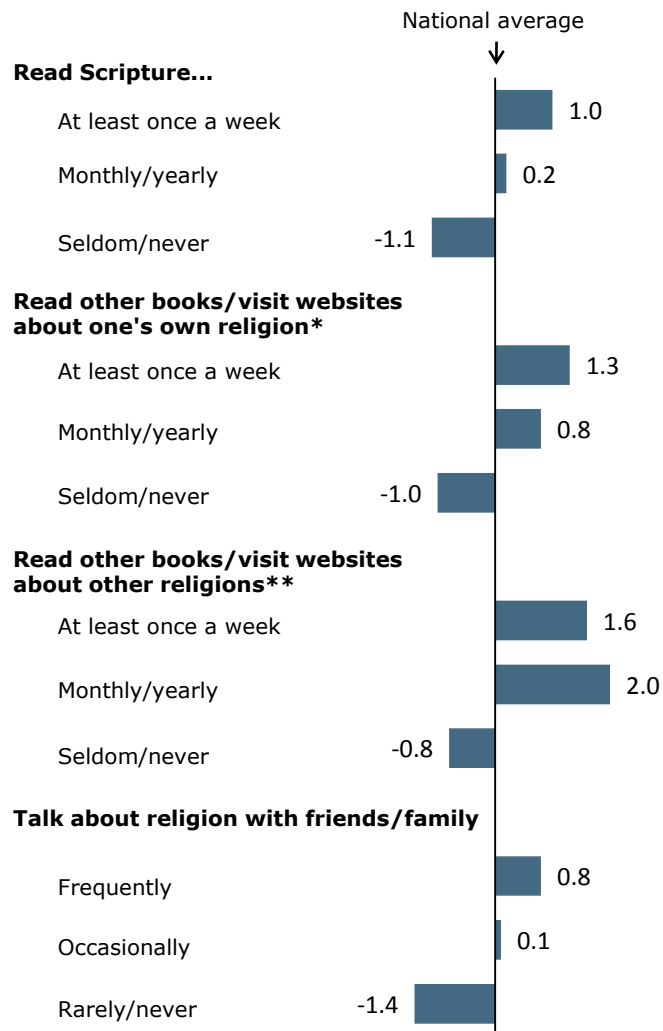
READING AND TALKING ABOUT RELIGION

Holding other factors constant, people who read Scripture at least once a week get roughly two additional questions right on average compared with those who seldom or never read Scripture. Frequent Scripture reading has a stronger impact on knowledge of the Bible than on knowledge of world religions.

Among people who are affiliated with a religion, those who regularly read other books (besides Scripture) about their own faith get an additional 2.3 questions right compared with those who seldom or never read other books about their own faith. By a similar margin, people who say they regularly read books or visit websites about religions other than their own also do better than those who

Reading and Talking About Religion, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors



*Based on those who are affiliated with a religion

**Combines responses to Q34c for those affiliated with a religion ("How often do you read books or visit websites about other religions") and Q34d for those unaffiliated with a religion ("How often do you read other books [besides scripture] or visit websites about religion").

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

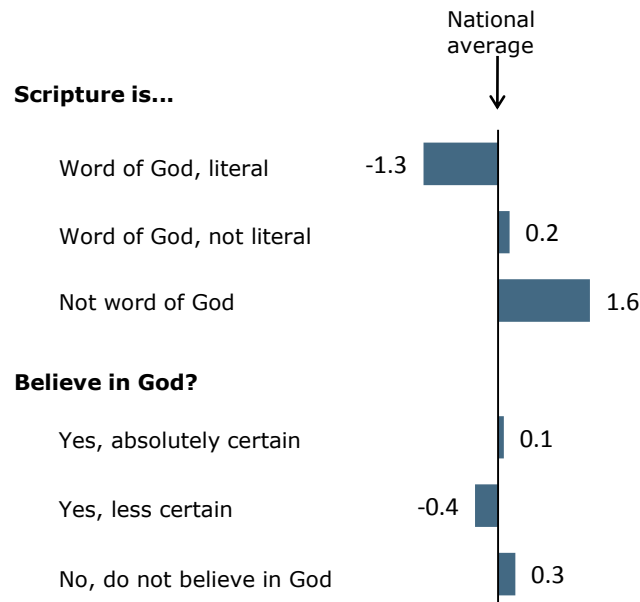
do not read books about other faiths. People who talk frequently about religion with family and friends get roughly two additional questions right compared with those who rarely or never discuss religion.

SCRIPTURAL LITERALISM AND BELIEF IN GOD

Holding other factors constant, people who say Scripture was written by men answer nearly three additional questions correctly, compared with those who say Scripture is the word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word. People who do not believe in God score slightly better (by 0.7 questions, out of 32) than people who believe in God but express doubts about this belief.

Belief in God and View of Scripture, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors

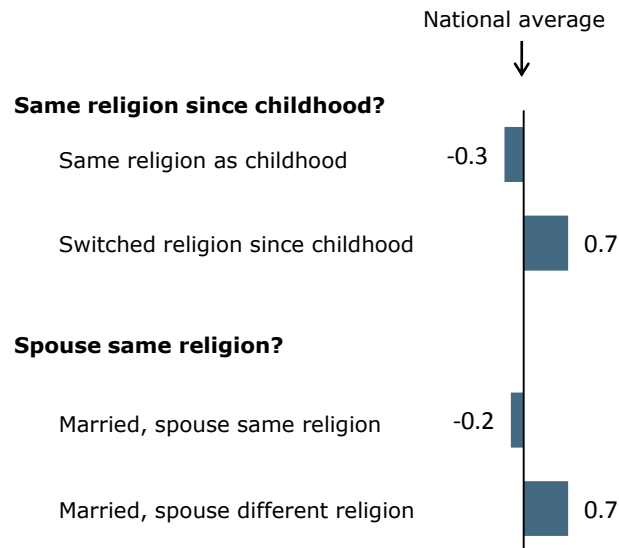


INTERFAITH MARRIAGE AND RELIGIOUS SWITCHING

After controlling for other factors, being married to someone from a different religion adds roughly one correct answer, on average, to a person's score on the survey compared with people who are married to someone who shares their religion. Religious knowledge also tends to be higher (by one question) among people who have switched faiths than among those who belong to the religion in which they were raised.

Religious Intermarriage and Switching, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors



PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

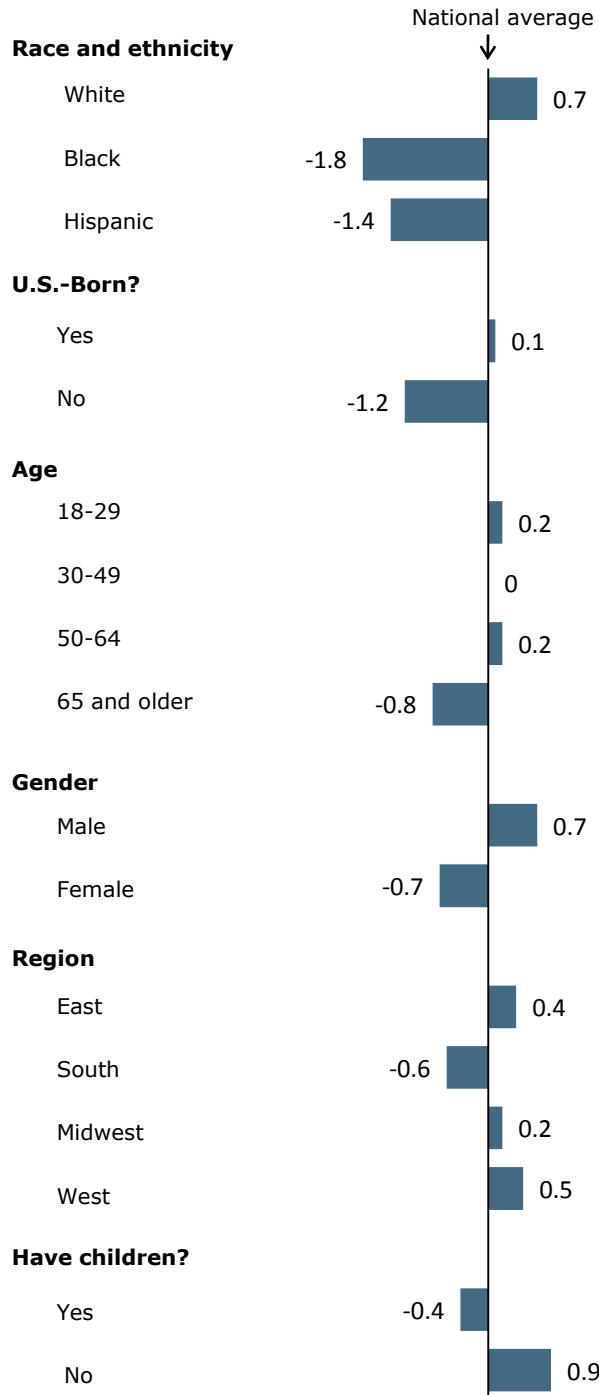
DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Holding other factors constant, blacks and Hispanics score significantly lower on the religious knowledge survey than do whites (by 2.5 questions for blacks and by 2.1 for Hispanics, out of 32 questions in total). Immigrants give 1.3 fewer correct answers than the U.S.-born do, all else held equal. Men score better than women by 1.4 questions. Those who live in the East, West or Midwest all score better (by about one correct answer) than those who live in the South. The oldest group in the population scores significantly lower than other age groups, by about one question. People who have never had children get 1.3 extra questions right compared with those who have had children.

EMBARGOED COPY – NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL 12:01 a.m. EDT, SEPT. 28, 2010

Demographics, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors



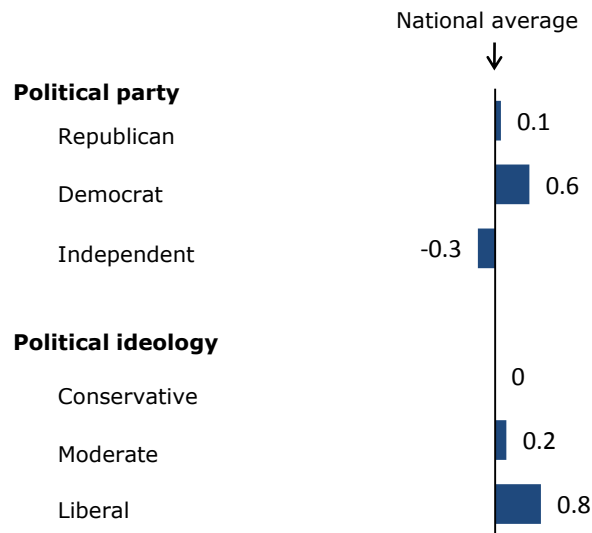
PEW FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

PARTISANSHIP AND IDEOLOGY

Democrats score better than Republicans on the survey by a slim but statistically significant margin of half a question, all else held equal. Self-described liberals score better than self-described conservatives by 0.8 questions.

Partisanship and Ideology, All Else Equal

of questions answered correctly compared with the national average, controlling for other religious and demographic factors



PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Appendix A: Survey Methodology

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS) among a national sample of 3,412 adults living in the continental United States, 18 years of age or older, from May 19-June 6, 2010 (2,393 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,019 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 444 who had no landline telephone). Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

Interviewing

All interviews were conducted using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system, which ensures that questions were asked in the proper sequence with appropriate skip patterns. CATI also allows certain questions and certain answer choices to be rotated, eliminating potential biases from the sequencing of questions or answers.

For the landline sample, half of the time interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult male currently at home and the other half of the time asked to speak with the youngest adult female currently at home. If no respondent of the initially requested gender was available, interviewers asked to speak with the youngest adult of the opposite gender who was currently at home. For the cell-phone sample, interviews were conducted with the person who answered the phone; interviewers verified that the person was an adult and could complete the call safely.

In an attempt to maximize survey response, unless an interview was completed or a callback scheduled for a respondent at a phone number in the sample, each number was contacted approximately seven times at varied times of day and days of the week. Cell-phone respondents also were offered a reimbursement of \$5 to cover any costs of taking the call on their mobile phones.

Sampling

The survey of the full national population used “random digit dial” (RDD) methodology. Samples of landline and cell phone exchanges were generated by Marketing Systems Group, a sister company of SSRS. The landline sample was “list-assisted,” meaning numbers were sampled from active “blocks” (area code plus three-digit exchange plus two-digit block number) that contained at least three residential directory listings; this is intended to exclude blocks dedicated for business or other nonresidential purposes.

The cell sample was not list-assisted but was drawn from systematic sampling of blocks dedicated to wireless phones and shared-service blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

The sample of 3,412 respondents included interviews with a nationally representative sample of 3,013 adults as well as an oversample of 399 people who are Jewish, Mormon, atheist or agnostic. One goal of the study was to attain sufficient numbers of interviews with members of these groups to permit reliable analysis of their religious knowledge. Oversampling was necessary because these groups account for a relatively small share of the overall population. Jews and Mormons each comprise roughly 1.7% of U.S. adults, according to the Pew Forum's 2007 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, while atheists and agnostics combined account for about 4% of the adult population, meaning that most surveys – even those based on large samples – do not include enough interviews with members of these groups to permit analysis of their views and characteristics.

Sampling Error

	Sample size	Margin of sampling error (in percentage points)
Total	3,412	+/- 2.5
Christian	2,528	+/- 2.5
Protestant	1,605	+/- 3.0
White evangelical	667	+/- 5.0
White mainline	490	+/- 5.5
Black Protestant	202	+/- 8.5
Catholic	679	+/- 5.0
White Catholic	484	+/- 5.5
Hispanic Catholic	117	+/- 11.0
Mormon	215	+/- 8.5
Jewish	212	+/- 8.5
Unaffiliated	546	+/- 5.5
Atheist/Agnostic	212	+/- 8.5
Nothing in particular	334	+/- 6.5

Other religious groups, including Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus, participated in the survey and are included in the estimates for the total population, though the survey did not include enough interviews to report on these groups separately.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S
FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE May 19-June 6, 2010

Oversampling was accomplished by recontacting respondents from previous SSRS surveys. SSRS conducts nationally representative dual-frame (landline and cell phone) random-digit-dial surveys every week and asks respondents their religion; for this study, SSRS recontacted households it had reached in the preceding six months that contained at least one adult who reported being Jewish, Mormon or having no religion. Adults reached in those households were asked to confirm whether they were Jewish, Mormon, or atheist or agnostic and then the interview proceeded.

In total, the sample includes 212 interviews with Jewish respondents (56 interviewed as part of the main national sample and 156 interviewed as part of the oversampling), 215

interviews with Mormons (54 interviewed as part of the national sample and 161 as part of the oversampling), and 212 interviews with atheists and agnostics (130 interviewed as part of the national sample and 82 as part of the oversampling). The survey included a total of 74 self-described atheists, by themselves too small a group for reliable statistical analysis, so those individuals were aggregated with the 138 agnostics for this analysis.

The accompanying table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Weighting

A two-stage weighting design was applied to ensure an accurate representation of the national population.

The first stage, the base or design weight phase, included four steps. The first was a correction for the disproportionate oversamples and was created by dividing the percentage of each of the four oversampled groups (Jews, Mormons, atheists and agnostics) by their corresponding percentage in the main RDD sample. (Atheists and agnostics were treated as separate groups in this stage of the weighting process.) The second step was a correction for the unequal probabilities of selection that result from some households having more qualified adults than others; households reporting having a single adult received a weight of 1, while those with two or more adults received a weight of 2 (cell respondents were given the average weight of 1). Third, a weight of 0.5 was applied to all respondents who reported having both a landline and a cell phone, as they were twice as likely to be sampled as respondents who only had one phone type. Finally, the recontact sample was provided a propensity weight to account for the potential bias associated with recontacting (panel bias). These four corrections (sample type, household adults, dual frame and recontact propensity) were then multiplied together to arrive at a final base (design) weight.

The data were then put through a second weighting stage, a post-stratification sample balancing routine utilizing national estimates from the Census' Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement for age, race and ethnicity, gender, education and region of the country; from the decennial census for population density; and from the National Health Interview Survey for telephone usage (landline-only, cell-only or dual usage according to whether the respondent mostly uses the cell phone or uses the landline regularly).

Sample Disposition and Response Rate

The overall response rate for this study is 17.2% using formula “RR3” of the Standard Definitions of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (see http://www.aapor.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Standard_Definitions1 for detail on this calculation). Following is a full disposition of the sample selected for this survey:

Sample Dispositions

	Landline	Cell	Oversample	Total
Total phone numbers used	50,076	35,466	2,575	88,117
Eligible, Interview (Category 1)				
Complete	2,010	1,003	400	3,413*
Eligible, non-interview (Category 2)				
Refusal	4,279	4,407	265	8,951
Break off	752	686	52	1,490
Physically or mentally unable/incompetent	118	128	3	249
No interviewer available for needed language	1	0	2	3
Unknown eligibility, non-interview (Category 3)				
Always busy	834	88	1	923
No answer	5,790	5,518	159	11,467
Answering machine-don't know if household	4,518	5,910	215	10,643
Call blocking	124	68	12	204
Technical phone problems	300	46	0	346
No screener completed	17	1,726	198	1,941
Not eligible (Category 4)				
Fax/data line	2,713	631	43	3,387
Non-working number	25,894	13,827	297	40,018
Business, government, other organizations	2,329	629	23	2,981
No eligible respondent	333	799	250	1,382
Quota filled	64	0	655	719
Interview Outcomes				
I=Complete interviews	2,010	1,003	400	3,413*
P=Partial interviews	0	0	0	0
R=Refusal and break off	5,031	5,093	317	10,441
O=Other	119	128	5	252
e=Estimated proportion of cases of unknown eligibility that are eligible	0.186	0.282	0.363	0.225
UH=Unknown household	11,566	11,630	387	23,583
UO=Unknown other	17	1,726	198	1,941
Response Rate 3				
$I/((I+P) + (R+NC+O) + e(UH+UO))$	20.0%	10.0%	42.8%	17.2%

*One respondent qualified for the survey via the oversampling of Jews, Mormons and atheists/agnostics but was later determined not to belong to any of these groups and was subsequently dropped from the dataset.

Appendix B: Survey Topline

**PEW FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
2010 RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE STUDY
TOPLINE SURVEY RESULTS
May 19 – June 6, 2010
N=3,412⁸**

GENDER. RECORD GENDER OF RESPONDENT

Male	Female
48	52

NO Q.1

ASK ALL:

2. All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?

Satisfied	Dissatisfied	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
26	68	6	1

ASK ALL:

3. And how often would you say you (INSERT; RANDOMIZE)... frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never?
And how often do you (INSERT NEXT STATEMENT)? (IF NECESSARY: frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never?)

a. Talk with family or friends about science

Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
25	34	26	15	1	*

b. Talk with family or friends about history

Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
35	37	20	7	*	--

c. Talk with family or friends about politics or other current events

Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
51	29	13	6	*	--

d. Talk with family or friends about religion

Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
44	30	17	9	*	*

⁸ The survey included oversamples of Jews, Mormons, atheists and agnostics. The data are weighted to produce results that are nationally representative. See survey methodology for details.

READ TO EVERYONE:

Now I am going to ask you some short questions such as you might see on a television game show. Some questions may be more difficult than others. If you don't know the answer just tell me and we'll move to the next question.

PROGRAMMING INSTRUCTION: RANDOMIZE Q.4/Q.5 BLOCK, Q.7/Q.8 BLOCK AND Q.9/Q.10/Q.11 BLOCK.

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.4 & Q.5)

4. Can you please tell me the name of the vice president of the United States?

Yes, Joe Biden	Yes, incorrect answer	(VOL.) No, don't know	(VOL.) Refused
59	5	36	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.4 & Q.5)

5. Do you happen to know which political party has a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives? (Democrats) OR (Republicans)? (ROTATE "DEMOCRATS" AND "REPUBLICANS")

Democrats	Republicans	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
72	18	*	10	*

NO Q.6

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.7 & Q.8)

7. True or false: Lasers work by focusing sound waves.

True	False	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
21	60	19	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.7 & Q.8)

8. True or false: antibiotics will kill viruses as well as bacteria.

True	False	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
36	59	5	*

ASK ALL:

(RANDOMIZE Q.9, Q.10, Q.11)

9. Which of the following is the name of the series of government programs passed while Franklin D. Roosevelt was president? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

The New Deal	The Square Deal	The Great Society	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
57	5	11	28	*

ASK ALL:

(RANDOMIZE Q.9, Q.10, Q.11)

10. Which movement did Susan B. Anthony lead? The movement to ...? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Give women the right to vote	Abolish slavery	Prohibit alcohol	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
72	8	3	17	*

ASK ALL:

(RANDOMIZE Q.9, Q.10, Q.11)

11. Who wrote the novel *Moby Dick*? Was it...? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Herman Melville	Nathaniel Hawthorne	Edith Wharton	Stephen King	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
42	18	2	4	33	--

NO Q.12 – Q.14

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.15 & Q.17)

15. When does the Jewish Sabbath begin? Does it begin on...? (READ IN ORDER)

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
45	30	7	18	*

NO Q.16

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.15 & Q.17)

17. Is Ramadan (READ AND RANDOMIZE)?

The Hindu festival of lights	A Jewish day of atonement	The Islamic holy month	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
7	11	52	30	*

NO Q.18 – Q.19

READ TO EVERYONE:

Now I have some background questions...

ASK ALL:

HISP4. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin such as Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban?

ASK ALL:

RACE1. Which of the following describes your race? You can select as many as apply. White, Black or African American, Asian or Asian American, or some other race?

COMBINED RESULTS FOR HISP4/RACE1

White non-Hispanic	Black non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Other	(VOL.) Don't know/Refused
67	12	14	6	1

ASK ALL:

MARITAL. Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed, or have you never been married?

Married	Living with a partner	Divorced	Separated	Widowed	Never been married	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
50	8	11	2	6	22	*	*

ASK ALL:

20. What is your present religion, if any? Are you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox such as Greek or Russian Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, atheist, agnostic, something else, or nothing in particular?
(INTERVIEWER: IF R VOLUNTEERS “nothing in particular, none, no religion, etc.” BEFORE REACHING END OF LIST, PROMPT WITH: and would you say that’s atheist, agnostic, or just nothing in particular?)

ASK IF RELIGION IS SOMETHING ELSE, NOTHING IN PARTICULAR, DK OR REFUSED:

CHR. Do you think of yourself as a Christian or not?

ASK IF PROTESTANT OR CHRISTIAN OR SOMETHING ELSE AND “YES” IN CHR:

21. As far as your present religion, what denomination or church, if any, do you identify with most closely? Just stop me when I get to the right one. Are you Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Episcopalian or Anglican, Church of Christ or Disciples of Christ, Congregational or United Church of Christ, Holiness, Reformed, Church of God, Nondenominational or Independent Church, something else, or none in particular?
(INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ QUESTION IF RESPONDENT VOLUNTEERED DENOMINATION IN PREVIOUS QUESTION. RECORD RESPONSE IN APPROPRIATE CATEGORY.)

ASK IF BAPTIST AND NON-BLACK:

- 21a. Which of the following Baptist churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Southern Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., an independent Baptist church, or some other Baptist church?

ASK IF BAPTIST AND BLACK:

- 21b. Which of the following Baptist churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The National Baptist Convention, the Progressive Baptist Convention, or some other Baptist church?

ASK IF METHODIST AND NON-BLACK:

- 21c. Which of the following Methodist churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The United Methodist Church, Free Methodist Church, or some other Methodist church?

ASK IF METHODIST AND BLACK:

- 21d. Which of the following Methodist churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, or some other Methodist church?

ASK IF IDENTIFY WITH A NONDENOMINATIONAL OR INDEPENDENT CHURCH:

- 21e. Which of the following kinds of nondenominational churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? An evangelical church, fundamentalist church, charismatic church, inter-denominational church, or some other kind of church?

ASK IF LUTHERAN:

- 21f. Which of the following Lutheran churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, or some other Lutheran church?

ASK IF PRESBYTERIAN:

- 21g. Which of the following Presbyterian churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Presbyterian Church in America, or some other Presbyterian church?

ASK IF PENTECOSTAL AND NON-BLACK:

- 21h. Which of the following Pentecostal churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Assemblies of God, Church of God Cleveland Tennessee, or some other church?

ASK IF PENTECOSTAL AND BLACK:

- 21i. Which of the following Pentecostal churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Church of God in Christ, Church of God of the Apostolic Faith, or some other church?

ASK IF EPISCOPALIAN OR ANGLICAN:

- 21j. Which of the following Episcopalian or Anglican Churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Episcopal Church in the USA, the Anglican Church, or some other church?

ASK IF CHRISTIAN CHURCH, CHURCH OF CHRIST, OR DISCIPLES OF CHRIST:

- 21k. Which of the following Christian churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, or some other church?

ASK IF CONGREGATIONAL OR UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST:

- 21l. Which of the following congregational churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The United Church of Christ, Conservative Congregational Christian, or some other church?

ASK IF HOLINESS:

- 21m. Which of the following Holiness churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Church of the Nazarene, the Wesleyan Church, the Free Methodist Church, or something else?

ASK IF REFORMED:

- 21n. Which of the following Reformed churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Reformed Church in America, the Christian Reformed Church, or some other church?

ASK IF CHURCH OF GOD AND NON-BLACK:

- 21o. Which of the following Churches of God, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Church of God Anderson Indiana, Church of God Cleveland Tennessee, or some other church?

ASK IF CHURCH OF GOD AND BLACK:

- 21p. Which of the following Churches of God, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Church of God in Christ, the Church of God of the Apostolic Faith, or some other church?

ASK IF MORMON:

- 21q. Which of the following Mormon churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Community of Christ, or some other church?

ASK IF ORTHODOX:

- 21r. Which of the following Orthodox churches, if any, do you identify with most closely? The Greek Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox, Orthodox Church in America, or some other church?

ASK IF JEWISH:

- 21s. Which Jewish group do you identify with most closely? Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, or something else?

ASK IF MUSLIM:

- 21t. Which of the following Muslim groups, if any, do you identify with most closely? Sunni, Shia, or something else?

ASK IF BUDDHIST:

- 21u. Which of the following Buddhist groups, if any, do you identify with most closely? Theravada [such as Vipassana], Mahayana Buddhism (such as zen), Vajrayana Buddhism (such as Tibetan), or something else?

ASK IF HINDU:

- 21v. Which of the following Hindu groups, if any, do you identify with most closely? Vaishnava Hinduism or Shaivite Hinduism, or is it something else?

COMBINED RESULTS FOR Q.20-Q.21V

Protestant	52
Baptist	18
Southern Baptist	6
Independent Baptist	3
National Baptist Convention	2
American Baptist Churches USA	1
Other Baptist	6
Methodist	5
United Methodist Church	4
Other Methodist	1
Lutheran	6
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	2
Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	2
Other Lutheran	2
Non-denominational Protestant	5
Pentecostal	4
Assemblies of God	1
Other Pentecostal	3
Presbyterian	3
Presbyterian Church USA	1
Other Presbyterian	2
Episcopalian	2
Episcopal Church USA	1
Other Episcopalian	1
Restorationist	2
Church of Christ	2
Other Restorationist	*
Congregationalist	1
Holiness	1
Reformed	*
Jehovah's Witness	1
Seventh Day Adventist	1
Other Protestant/Protestant non-specific	5
Catholic	24
Mormon	2
Orthodox Christian	*
Jewish	1
Reform Judaism	1
Other	1
Muslim	1
Buddhist	*
Hindu	*
Unitarian	*
Other faiths	1
Unaffiliated	16
Atheist	1
Agnostic	3
Nothing in Particular	12
Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1

ASK IF CHRISTIAN:

BORN. Would you describe yourself as a "born-again" or evangelical Christian, or not?

RESULTS BASED ON TOTAL

Yes	No	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused	Undesignated	Total Christian
36	38	3	*	*	=79

NO Q.22 – Q.24

ASK ALL:

ATTEND. Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services... more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?

More than once a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Seldom	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
15	25	14	18	16	12	*	*

ASK ALL:

25. How important is religion in your life – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not at all important	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
57	25	9	9	1	*

ASK ALL:

26. Do you believe in God or a universal spirit, or not?

ASK IF BELIEVE IN GOD OR UNIVERSAL SPIRIT:

27. How certain are you about this belief? Are you absolutely certain, fairly certain, not too certain, or not at all certain?

Yes, believe in God or a universal spirit					No, Don't Believe in God	(VOL.) Other/Don't know/Refused
Absolutely certain	Fairly certain	Not too certain	Not at all certain	(VOL.) Don't know/Refused		
69	17	4	1	1	6	2

ASK ALL:

28. Which comes closer to your view? [HOLY BOOK*] (is/are) the word of God, OR [HOLY BOOK*] (are/is a book) written by men and (is/are) not the word of God?

ASK IF WORD OF GOD

29. And would you say that [HOLY BOOK*] (is/are) to be taken literally, word for word, OR not everything in [HOLY BOOK*] should be taken literally, word for word?

*Note: Christians, the religiously unaffiliated, and those not specifying their religious faith were asked whether “The Bible is” the word of God; Jews were asked whether “The Hebrew Scriptures are” the word of God; Muslims were asked whether “The Koran is” the word of God; all others were asked whether “the Holy Scripture is” the word of God.

[Bible/Hebrew Scriptures/Koran/Holy Scripture] [is/are] the word of God			[Bible/Hebrew Scriptures/Koran/Holy Scripture] [is/are] not the word of God	(VOL.) Other/Don't know/Refused
Word of God, to be taken literally word for word	Word of God, not to be taken literally	(VOL.) Word of God, Other/Don't know/Refused		
35	28	3	28	6

NO Q.30 – Q.33

ASK ALL:

34. How often do you (INSERT ITEM; ASK a-d IN ORDER)? More than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?

ASK ALL:

a. Read Scripture outside of religious services

More than once a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Seldom	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
26	10	12	13	17	20	1	*

ASK IF AFFILIATED WITH A RELIGION (N=2866):

b. Read other books or visit websites about your religion

More than once a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Seldom	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
13	8	15	15	23	25	1	*

ASK IF AFFILIATED WITH A RELIGION (N=2866):

c. Read books or visit websites about other religions

More than once a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Seldom	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
3	3	8	15	25	45	1	*

ASK IF UNAFFILIATED WITH A RELIGION (N=546):

d. Read other books or visit websites about religion

More than once a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Seldom	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused	Undesignated
4	3	9	14	22	46	2	*	1

ASK IF MARRIED OR LIVING WITH PARTNER (N=1,946):

SPREL. And what is your (spouse’s/partner’s) religion, if any? Are they Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox such as Greek or Russian Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, atheist, agnostic, something else, or nothing in particular?

ASK IF SPREL = SOMETHING ELSE, NOTHING IN PARTICULAR, DON’T KNOW, OR REFUSED:

SPCHR. And is that a Christian religion, or not?

Protestant*	49
Roman Catholic	25
Mormon	2
Orthodox	1
Jewish	2
Muslim	*
Buddhist	*
Hindu	1
Atheist	2
Agnostic	2
Something else (SPECIFY)	1
Nothing in particular	10
Unitarian (VOL.)	*
Same religion as me (VOL.)	2
Don’t know (VOL.)	2
Refused (VOL.)	1

*Note: Includes those volunteering their religion as “Christian” or “Just a Christian.”

ASK ALL:

34aa. Which comes closer to your view? (READ & ROTATE)

Humans and other living things have evolved over time	Humans and other living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time	(VOL.) Don’t know	(VOL.) Refused
52	40	8	1

READ TO EVERYONE:

Now I have some more short questions such as you might see on a television game show. If you don’t know the answer just tell me and we’ll move to the next question.

ASK ALL:

35. Do you happen to know which of these is the king of gods in ancient Greek mythology? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Zeus	Mars	Apollo	(VOL.) Don’t know	(VOL.) Refused
65	1	9	25	*

ASK ALL:

(RANDOMIZE Q.36, Q.37a, Q.37b)

36. Do you happen to know the name of the holy book of Islam? (DO NOT READ; PROMPT FOR ANSWER)

Yes, the Koran	Yes (incorrect answer)	(VOL.) No, don’t know	(VOL.) Refused
54	2	44	*

ASK ALL:

(RANDOMIZE Q.36, Q.37a, Q.37b)

37a. Which of these religions aims at nirvana, the state of being free from suffering? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
5	36	16	43	*

ASK ALL:

(RANDOMIZE Q.36, Q.37a, Q.37b)

37b. In which religion are Vishnu and Shiva central figures? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Islam	Hinduism	Taoism	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
6	38	4	52	*

ASK ALL:

38. Is an (INSERT FIRST ITEM; ROTATE a and b) someone who believes in God, someone who does NOT believe in God, or someone who is unsure whether God exists? And is an (INSERT NEXT ITEM) someone who believes in God, someone who does NOT believe in God, or someone who is unsure whether God exists?

a. atheist

Someone who believes in God	Someone who does NOT believe in God	Someone who is unsure whether God exists	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
2	85	7	5	*

b. agnostic

Someone who believes in God	Someone who does NOT believe in God	Someone who is unsure whether God exists	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
5	12	62	22	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.39 & Q.40)

39. What is the first book of the Bible? (DO NOT READ LIST)
(INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT SAYS THE HEBREW WORD FOR GENESIS ('Bereishit').CODE AS CORRECT.)

Genesis	Incorrect	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
63	8	29	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.39 & Q.40)

40. Will you tell me the names of the first four books of the New Testament of the Bible, that is the Four Gospels? (INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF RESPONDENT NAMES FEWER THAN FOUR, PROBE "Can you name any others?" STOP PROBING AFTER RESPONDENT NAMES FOUR EVEN IF ONE OR MORE ARE INCORRECT. DO NOT READ LIST. CODE 1, CORRECTLY NAMED ALL FOUR, IF RESPONDENT IMMEDIATELY NAMES ALL FOUR, OTHERWISE CODE INDIVIDUALLY AS RESPONDENT NAMES THEM)

Named all four correctly	45
Named 1-3 correctly	6
Did not name any correctly	3
Don't know (VOL.)	46
Refused (VOL.)	*

ASK ALL:

41. Where, according to the Bible, was Jesus born? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Bethlehem	Jericho	Jerusalem	Nazareth	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
71	1	12	13	4	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.42 & Q.43)

42. When was the Mormon religion founded? (READ IN ORDER)

Before the year 1200 A.D.	Between 1200 and 1800	Sometime after 1800	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
5	10	44	40	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.42 & Q.43)

43. The Book of Mormon tells the story of Jesus Christ appearing to people in what area of the world? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

The Americas	Middle East	Asia	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
40	25	3	31	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.44 & Q.45)

44. Which of the following best describes Catholic teaching about the bread and wine used for Communion? (READ IN ORDER)

The bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, or	The bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
40	52	*	8	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.44 & Q.45)

45. Which of these religious groups traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone? (READ AND ROTATE FIRST TWO OPTIONS, THEN THREE, THEN FOUR, WITH ITEMS IN PARENTHESES ROTATED IN SAME ORDER AS FIRST TWO OPTIONS)

Only Protestants	Only Catholics	Both (Protestants) and (Catholics)	Neither (Protestants) nor (Catholics)	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
16	9	38	10	27	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.46 & Q.47)

46. Please tell me which of the following is NOT one of the Ten Commandments: (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Do not commit adultery	Do unto others as you would have them do unto you	Do not steal	Keep the Sabbath holy	(VOL.) All are in the Ten Commandments	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
2	55	5	28	4	5	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.46 & Q.47)

47. Which Bible figure is most closely associated with (INSERT STATEMENT; RANDOMIZE a-d)?
Is it ...? (READ RESPONSE OPTIONS IN RANDOM ORDER BUT KEEP IN SAME ORDER FOR a-d.)

a. Remaining obedient to God despite suffering

Job	Elijah	Moses	Abraham	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
39	6	13	13	28	*

NO ITEM b

c. Leading the exodus from Egypt

Job	Elijah	Moses	Abraham	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
2	3	72	5	18	*

d. Willingness to sacrifice his son for God

Job	Elijah	Moses	Abraham	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
6	6	9	60	19	*

ASK ALL:

48. Would you tell me if (INSERT STATEMENT: RANDOMIZE a-c, ALWAYS ASK d LAST.) (READ RESPONSE OPTIONS IN RANDOM ORDER BUT KEEP IN SAME ORDER FOR a-d)?

a. Mother Teresa was

Catholic	Jewish	Buddhist	Mormon	Hindu	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
82	3	1	1	3	*	10	*

b. The Dalai Lama is

Catholic	Jewish	Buddhist	Mormon	Hindu	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
1	3	47	1	25	*	23	*

c. Joseph Smith was

Catholic	Jewish	Buddhist	Mormon	Hindu	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
5	5	1	51	1	*	36	*

d. Maimonides was

Catholic	Jewish	Buddhist	Mormon	Hindu	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
2	8	5	2	11	1	71	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.49 & Q.50)

49. Which of the following statements best describes what the U.S. Constitution says about religion? (READ IN ORDER. READ RESPONSE NUMBER WITH EACH ITEM IN LIST).
(INTERVIEWER: IF R ASKS WHETHER WE MEAN THE CONSTITUTION AS AMENDED, SAY: Yes, what does the U.S. Constitution, including its amendments, say about religion?)

1-Christianity should be given special emphasis by the government	2-The government shall neither establish a religion nor interfere with the practice of religion, or	3-The Constitution does not say anything one way or the other about religion	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
3	68	18	11	*

ASK ALL:

(ROTATE Q.49 & Q.50)

50. According to rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court, is a public school teacher permitted to, (READ FIRST ITEM, RANDOMIZE a-c), or not?
And is a public school teacher permitted to (NEXT ITEM), or not?

a. lead a class in prayer

Yes, permitted	No, not permitted	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
6	89	5	*

b. read from the Bible as an example of literature

Yes, permitted	No, not permitted	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
23	67	11	*

c. offer a class comparing the world's religions

Yes, permitted	No, not permitted	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
36	51	13	*

ASK ALL:

51. Thinking about when you were a child, in what religion were you raised, if any? Were you Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox such as Greek or Russian Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, atheist, agnostic, something else, or nothing in particular?
(INTERVIEWER: IF R VOLUNTEERS “nothing in particular, none, no religion, etc.” BEFORE REACHING END OF LIST, PROMPT WITH: and would you say that was atheist, agnostic, or just nothing in particular?)

ASKED IF RAISED SOMETHING ELSE, NOTHING IN PARTICULAR, DK OR REF:

- 51a. And was that a Christian religion, or not?

Protestant*	53
Roman Catholic	31
Mormon	2
Orthodox	1
Jewish	2
Muslim	1
Buddhist	*
Hindu	*
Atheist	*
Agnostic	*
Something else (SPECIFY)	1
Nothing in particular	8
Unitarian (VOL.)	*
Don't know (VOL.)	1
Refused (VOL.)	*

*Note: Includes those volunteering their religion as “Christian” or “Just a Christian.”

ASK ALL:

52. When you were growing up, did you attend (public) or (private) school? (ROTATE ITEMS IN PARENTHESES)

Public	Private	(VOL.) Both	(VOL.) Home schooled	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
79	12	9	*	*	*

ASK IF ATTENDED PRIVATE SCHOOL OR BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE :

52a. And was that a religious private school or not a religious private school?

RESULTS BASED ON TOTAL

Religious	Not religious	(VOL.) Both	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused	Total private/private & public school attendees
17	3	*	*	*	=21

ASK ALL:

53. When you were growing up, about how often did you attend religious education classes or participate in religious groups for young people? Would you say...? (READ IN ORDER)

More than once a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Seldom, or	Never	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
27	38	9	7	8	11	1	*

NO Q.54

READ TO EVERYONE:

We are getting close to the end...

ASK ALL:

55. Do you happen to know what religion most people in (INSERT FIRST COUNTRY; RANDOMIZE a-d) consider themselves? Is that...? (READ RESPONSE OPTIONS IN RANDOM ORDER BUT KEEP IN SAME ORDER FOR a-d.) What about (NEXT COUNTRY)? (INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF R SAYS "They're divided," PROBE WITH "Are they mostly (RE-READ LIST)?" IF STILL DIVIDED, CODE AS "5 – DIVIDED")

a. India

Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	(VOL.) Divided	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
9	62	9	3	*	16	*

b. Indonesia

Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	(VOL.) Divided	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
19	15	27	4	*	34	*

NO ITEM c

d. Pakistan

Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	(VOL.) Divided	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
2	8	68	2	*	19	*

NO Q.56 – Q.59

ASK ALL:

60. What was the name of the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Martin Luther	Thomas Aquinas	John Wesley	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
46	5	12	36	*

ASK ALL:

61. Which of these people developed the theory of evolution by natural selection? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Charles Darwin	Sigmund Freud	Clarence Darrow	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
71	6	3	20	*

ASK ALL:

62. And which of these court trials focused on whether evolution could be taught in public schools? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

The Scopes trial	The Salem witch trials	Brown vs. Board of Education	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
31	3	36	30	*

READ TO EVERYONE:

And one final quiz-type question ...

ASK ALL:

63. Which one of these preachers participated in the period of religious activity known as the First Great Awakening? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)

Jonathan Edwards	Charles Finney	Billy Graham	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
11	10	28	50	*

READ TO EVERYONE:

Now, just a few questions for statistical purposes only...

ASK ALL:

AGE. What is your age? (RECORD RESPONSE)

18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
22	35	25	16	*	2

Note: Cell phone respondents were asked for their age at the beginning of the survey

ASK ALL:

EDUC. What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? (DO NOT READ LIST)

None, or grade 1-8	3
High school incomplete (grades 9-11)	11
High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)	32
Technical, trade or vocational school AFTER high school	3
Some college, associate degree, no 4-year degree	24
College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other 4-year degree)	18
Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college	9
Don't know/refused	*

ASK IF ATTENDED COLLEGE:

64. Have you ever taken any college-level religion courses, or not?

RESULTS BASED ON TOTAL

Yes	No	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused	Total college graduates/some college
15	35	*	--	=51

ASK ALL:

HHADULT. How many adults, 18 or over, currently live in your household including yourself? (RECORD RESPONSE)

1	2	3	4+	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
21	53	15	9	*	1

ASK ALL:

INCOME. Last year, that is in 2009, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category. (READ LIST IN ORDER)

Less than \$10,000	7
10 to under \$20,000	10
20 to under \$30,000	11
30 to under \$40,000	10
40 to under \$50,000	9
50 to under \$75,000	13
75 to under \$100,000	9
100 to under \$150,000	7
\$150,000 or more	5
Don't know (VOL.)	8
Refused (VOL.)	11

ASK ALL:

PARTY. In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

Republican	Democrat	Independent	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
26	33	33	5	1	1	1

ASK IF INDEPENDENT, NO PREFERENCE, OTHER PARTY, DK, OR REFUSED:

PARTYLN. As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

RESULTS BASED ON TOTAL

Lean Republican	Lean Democrat	(VOL.) Other	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused	Total independent/no preference/Other party/DK/Ref.
13	13	6	8	2	=41

ASK ALL:

IDEO. In general, would you describe your political views as...? (READ LIST IN ORDER)

Very conservative	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Very liberal	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
8	29	32	16	6	7	1

ASK ALL:

USBORNIA. Were you born in the United States or in another country?

Yes, born in the U.S.	No, some other country	Puerto Rico (VOL)	Other U.S. territories (VOL)	Don't know (VOL)	Refused (VOL)
89	10	*	*	*	*

ASK IF BORN IN U.S.:

USBORN2. Were both of your parents born in the United States, or not?

RESULTS BASED ON TOTAL

Yes, both parents born in U.S.	No, one or both parents born in another country	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused	Total U.S. born
79	10	*	*	=89

ASK ALL:

65. How many children have you ever had? Please count all your biological children who were born alive at any time in your life. (RECORD RESPONSE) (INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF R ASKS WHETHER ADOPTED CHILDREN OR STEPCCHILDREN SHOULD BE INCLUDED, SAY “No, we’re asking you only to count all your biological children who were born alive at any time in your life.”)

1	2	3+	None	(VOL.) Don't know	(VOL.) Refused
15	25	28	30	*	1

ASK OF LANDLINE SAMPLE:

L1. Now thinking about your telephone use...Do you have a working cell phone?

ASK OF LANDLINE SAMPLE IF NO CELL PHONE AND MULTI-PERSON HOUSEHOLD:

L1a. Does anyone in your household have a working cell phone?

ASK OF LANDLINE SAMPLE IF SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLD AND R HAS CELLPHONE :

L2. Of all the telephone calls that you receive, do you get (all or almost all calls on a cell phone, some on a cell phone and some on a regular home phone, all or almost all on a regular home phone)? (READ ITEMS IN PARENS IN REVERSE ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF OF SAMPLE)

ASK OF LANDLINE SAMPLE IF MULTI-PERSON HOUSEHOLD WITH CELL PHONE:

L3. Now thinking about all the people in your household, including yourself, of all the telephone calls that your household receives, are (all or almost all calls on a cell phone, some on a cell phone and some on a regular home phone, all or almost all on a regular home phone)? (READ ITEMS IN PARENS IN REVERSE ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF OF SAMPLE)

ASK OF CELL PHONE SAMPLE:

CP1. Now thinking about your telephone use, is there at least one telephone INSIDE your home that is currently working and is not a cell phone?

ASK OF CELL PHONE SAMPLE IF SINGLE PERSON HOUSEHOLD AND R HAS LANDLINE:

C2. Of all the telephone calls that you receive, do you get (all or almost all calls on a cell phone, some on a cell phone and some on a regular home phone, all or almost all on a regular home phone)? (READ ITEMS IN PARENS IN REVERSE ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF OF SAMPLE)

ASK OF CELL PHONE SAMPLE IF MULTI-PERSON HOUSEHOLD WITH LANDLINE:

C3. Now thinking about all the people in your household, including yourself, of all the telephone calls that your household receives, are (all or almost all calls on a cell phone, some on a cell phone and some on a regular home phone, all or almost all on a regular home phone)? (READ ITEMS IN PARENS IN REVERSE ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF OF SAMPLE)

COMBINED RESULTS TO L.1-C.3

Landline only	Dual (few/some) calls on cell	Dual (cell mostly)	Cell phone only	(VOL.) Other/Don't know/Refused
12	47	17	23	1