

gen ✦ IN CANADA Alpha

THE NEXT GENERATION



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 INTRODUCTION

5 GEN ALPHA + FAITH

20 FAMILY + INFLUENCERS

37 THEIR DIGITAL LIVES

48 SEX + GENDER

57 MENTAL HEALTH

65 ABOUT ONEHOPE

65 METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

INTRODUCTION

Generation Alpha refers to children and teens born between 2010 and 2024. The term Gen Alpha was coined to signal the start of something new. Gen Alpha makes up roughly 13% of the population in Canada, with more to come.¹ These young people will grow up in an ever-evolving world, developing unique and diverse viewpoints as a result of their life experiences. Throughout this report, we refer to these young people as preteens.

As you explore the report, you'll encounter some Gen Alpha personas. While these personas are fictional, they are directly informed by real responses from our survey. They help bring the data to life, offering a deeper connection to the stories and experiences it represents. These portrayals may feel so realistic that they remind you of a young person you know!

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

- **Anchored:** Preteens express a high level of satisfaction with their family life. Most say that family members or parents are their number one source for guidance on life's important issues.
- **Connected:** Young people spend much of their free time online, and most indicate they feel good about it. Watching YouTube and gaming are among their top preferred online activities, highlighting the central role these play in shaping their daily lives.
- **Complex:** Gen Alpha is navigating challenging ideas about gender and sexuality at an early age within an increasingly fluid culture. As they shape their understanding of identity and relationships, they often mirror the shifting norms of their generation.
- **Vulnerable:** Gen Alpha is already reporting mental health challenges like loneliness and high anxiety. Non-religious preteens and those who spend more than 5 hours online daily are particularly vulnerable, reporting higher rates of mental health challenges.

About the Research



Canada



December 2024



422 internet-connected young people



Ages 11-13



49-item survey

¹ Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0027-01 Age \(in single years\), average age and median age and gender: Canada and forward sortation areas, 2021.](#)

ABOUT THE PRETEENS

OneHope designed this research study to learn about Gen Alpha's beliefs, behaviours and influences. In December 2024, we worked with a professional data collection company to distribute our online survey to preteens ages 11-13 across Canada.² The number of young people surveyed was selected to ensure these results accurately represent this age group.



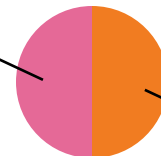
422
YOUNG PEOPLE
SURVEYED



INTERNET CONNECTED

GIRLS

50%



BOYS

50%

AGE

32%

11

34%

12

34%

13

RELIGION



Christian 49%

Non-Christian 51%

CATHOLIC 27%

OTHER CHRISTIAN 22%

NON-RELIGIOUS³ 35%

OTHER RELIGIONS 16%

- Islam: 6%
- Hinduism: 3%
- Other: 3%

- Judaism: 2%
- Buddhism: 1%

HOUSEHOLD⁴

76%

Two biological
parents⁵

14%

Single-parent family

10%

Blended family

1%

Other living
situations

RACE/ETHNICITY⁶

58%
White

18%
Asian

7%
African

4% Latin, Central,
South American or
Caribbean

2%
Other

8% Two or more
races/ethnicities

3% North
American Indigenous

² Since the survey was conducted online, this data only represents internet-using preteens, not all preteens in Canada.

³ Includes atheists, agnostics and those who selected "none of the above."

⁴ All percentages in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number. As a result, some totals do not add up to 100%.

⁵ This is close to national averages. Census data collected in 2021 shows that 71% of Canadian children ages 0 to 14 were living in a two-parent family, while 20% were living in a single-parent family and 9% in a blended family. Statistics Canada, *Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population: Families, Households and Marital Status*, accessed March 31, 2025, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/page.cfm?topic=4&lang=E&guid=2021A000011124>.

⁶ Race and ethnic groups are exclusive except for "Two or More."

Gen Alpha + Faith

GEN ALPHA
IN CANADA

MEET GEN ALPHA

Meet 13-year-old **Ethan**.

Ethan calls himself a Christian and even says faith is a big part of who he is, but only in the way an old family tradition is. He believes in God, but never prays, reads the Bible or goes to church—his parents don't either. If someone asked, he'd talk about what he believes, but he usually keeps it to himself so things don't get awkward.

He thinks Jesus had some good ideas we could use today, but the Bible seems outdated, often causing problems. He also doesn't agree that forgiveness only comes through faith in Jesus. If a friend invited him to church, he'd probably shrug and say, "Maybe."

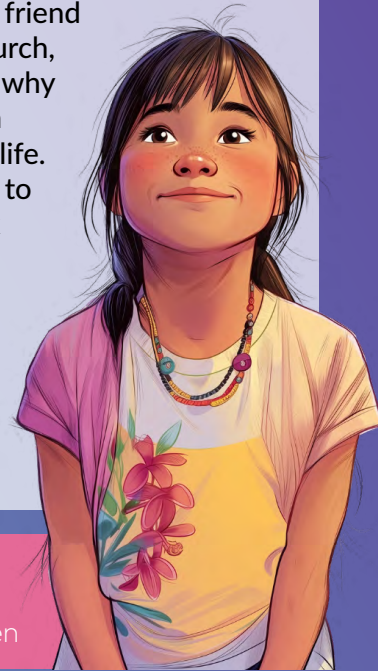


@!EthanXP
Go Leafs Go!



Meet 11-year-old **Chloe**.

Chloe lives in a blended family with her siblings, and home life is pretty good but not perfect. She gets along fine with everyone, but sometimes she feels a little left out. What matters most to her is her friends—she feels like she can totally be herself around them. Her biological parents don't believe in God, but she's not really sure what her new stepmom believes. A friend recently invited her to church, but she doesn't really see why she'd go. God and religion just aren't part of Chloe's life. They don't feel important to her, and she doesn't think much about them.



@!chloeandco
Extra cheese, please
Selfies or it didn't happen

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

49% of Gen Alpha in Canada self-identifies as Christian.

14% display the beliefs and habits of an Emerging Committed Christian.

2 in 3 preteens say their faith, religion, or spiritual journey is an important part of their identity.

28% of Christians read the Bible monthly or several times a year while 32% never read it.

Most of Gen Alpha (**74%**) feels confident sharing faith, yet just over half (**56%**) feels responsible to do so.

Emerging

COMMITTED CHRISTIANS

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

We imagined the same would be true of Gen Alpha and wanted to explore the Committed framework with preteens in mind. But it is important to be aware that young people at this age are by no means set in their beliefs and behaviours. Developmentally, 11- to 13-year-olds often mirror their parents' behaviours or main influences. Our data immediately reflected this, showing that 96% of the preteens who fit our Committed construct also live with Christian parents.

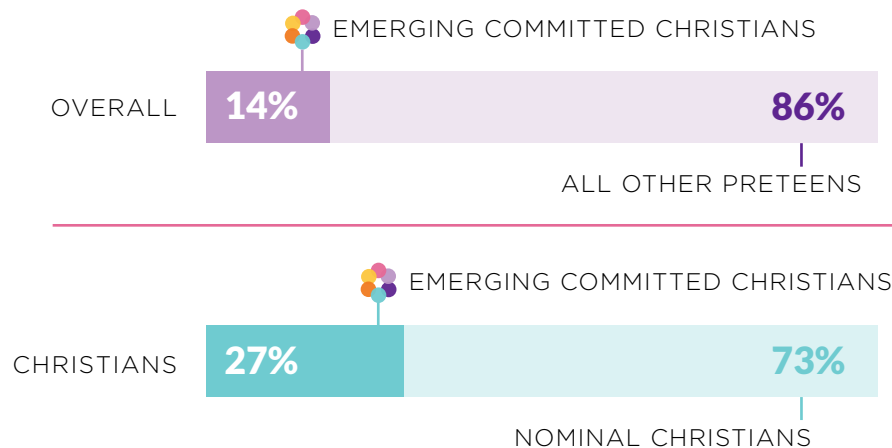
We looked at six traits that indicate Gen Alpha is committed to their Christian faith—the same six we used for our Gen Z study. However, for this report, we call these young people Emerging Committed Christians. This renaming reminds us that Gen Alpha's faith and spiritual practices are still evolving.

6 TRAITS OF AN EMERGING COMMITTED CHRISTIAN PRETEEN



We found that 14% of the young people we surveyed are Emerging Committed Christians. When we looked just at Christian young people, we found that 27% of Christians display the beliefs and behaviours of an Emerging Committed Christian. Most Gen Alpha Christians are still nominal—missing one or more of the traits we consider key to commitment.

14%
OF CANADIAN
GEN ALPHAS
ARE EMERGING
COMMITTED
CHRISTIANS.



MEET GEN ALPHA



@!amazingGrace
❄️ cold hands
💖 warm heart

Meet 12-year-old **Grace**.

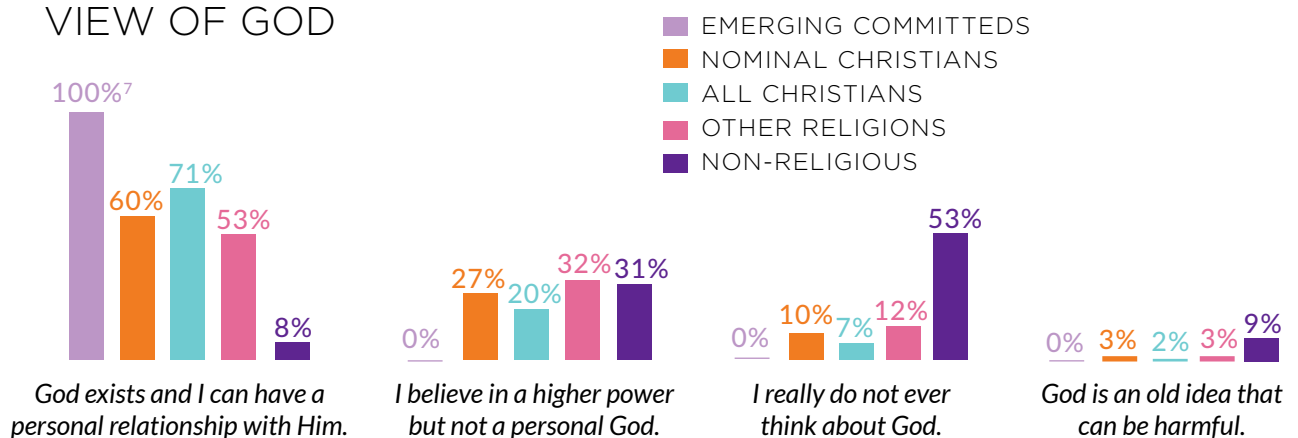
As this generation continues to define itself, we see a small group of young people whose faith is developing at an encouraging rate. Grace is one of them. She goes to church every week with her parents, prays and reads the Bible daily—all of which shape how she sees the world. When she has questions about God, she asks her parents. She knows they take their faith seriously because she sees them praying and reading the Bible on their own. She has wonderful friends, but sometimes she worries about losing them. The thought of having no friends scares her. When the fear creeps in, she prays—it helps her feel close to God and reminds her that her faith is real.

Spiritual

VIEWPOINTS

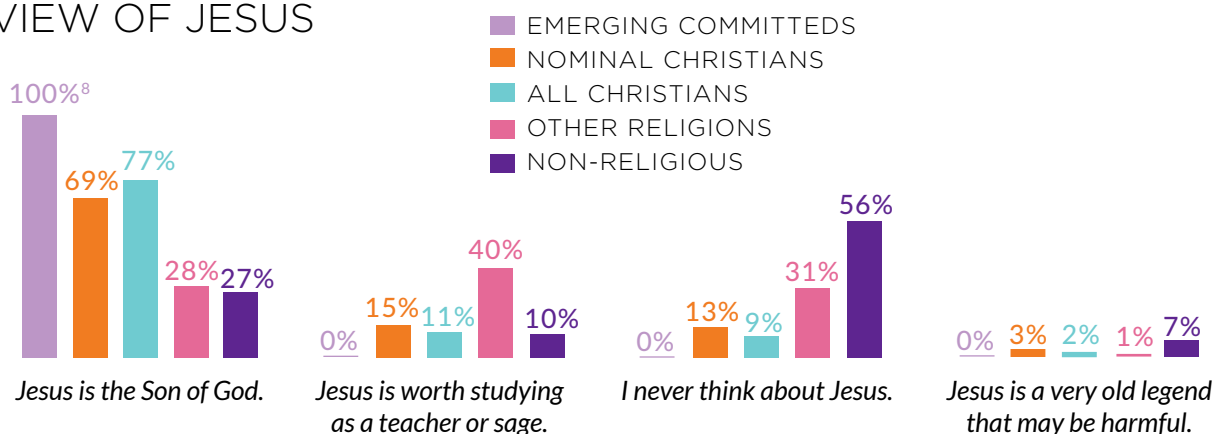
Let's look at key beliefs and behaviours that help us understand Gen Alpha's relationship with Christianity. Among Gen Alpha Christians in Canada, 71% believe in God's existence and the possibility of a personal relationship with Him. However, over a quarter of Nominal Christians believe in a higher power but not a personal God. This shows the need to remind young people that God is not far off—He is present with us and wants to be actively involved in our daily lives.

VIEW OF GOD



Non-religious preteens are mostly apathetic, with 53% saying they do not ever think about God. Still, nearly a third seem spiritually curious, acknowledging a belief in a higher power while remaining uncertain about a personal God. This leaning towards spirituality presents an opportunity to connect with non-religious young people by addressing their search for meaning in ways that resonate with them.

VIEW OF JESUS



⁷ Preteens needed to select this response to qualify as Emerging Committed Christians.

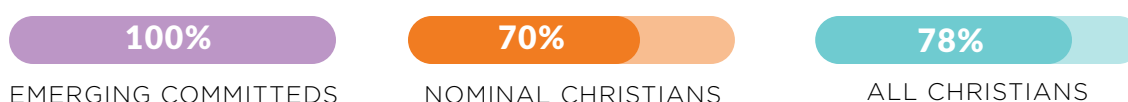
⁸ Preteens needed to select this response to qualify as Emerging Committed Christians.

Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is relatively strong among Christians, with nearly 4 in 5 affirming this conviction. This could provide a practical starting point for gospel conversations with these young people, creating a pathway to broader conversations about how Jesus' identity as God's Son impacts their daily lives.

Views on Jesus among non-religious preteens are mixed. While the majority say they never think about Jesus, very few consider Him to be a harmful legend. Surprisingly, 27% believe Jesus is the Son of God. This could suggest that some non-religious preteens have been exposed to Christian teachings, either through family, friends or other cultural influences.

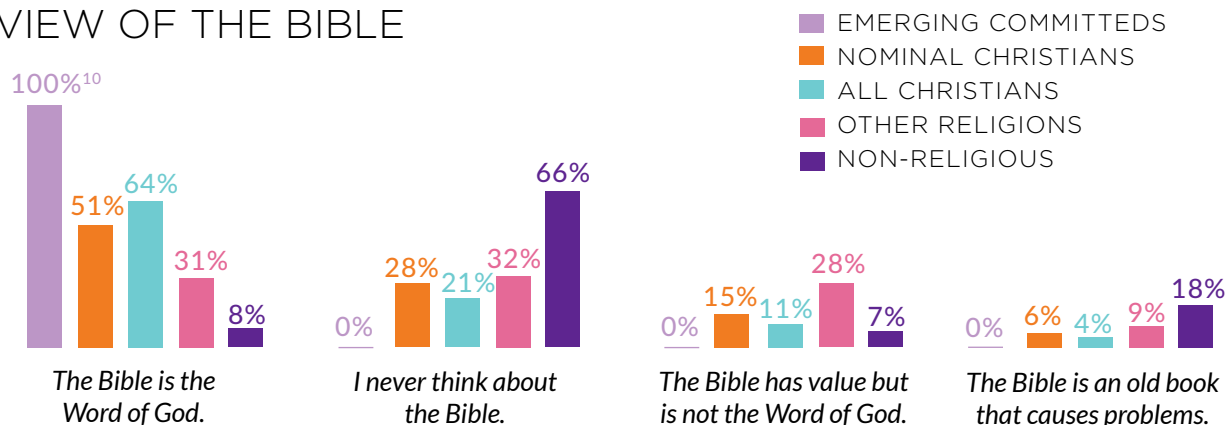
FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ.⁹



In addition to their biblical view of Jesus, most Christian preteens recognize what He has done for them—78% agree that forgiveness of sins is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ. Only preteens who agreed with this belief were categorized as Emerging Committed Christians.

VIEW OF THE BIBLE



Of their core beliefs about Jesus, God and the Bible, Christian preteens show the least commitment to the Bible. Nearly two-thirds (64%) say the Bible is the Word of God, with half of Nominals (51%) saying the same. Among non-religious preteens, apathy towards the Bible is more pronounced than hostility. Two-thirds say they never think about it, while only 18% say it is a problematic old book.

Though preteens of other religions differed from Christians on all three spiritual viewpoints, they still exhibited some curiosity. This offers hope that as they interact with their Christian peers, they might be open to new perspectives about God, Jesus and the Bible.

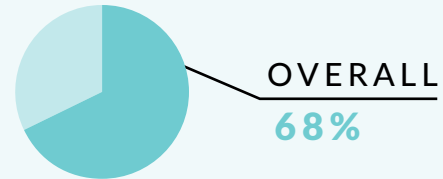
⁹ Only preteens who self-identified as Christian were asked this question.

¹⁰ Preteens needed to select this response to qualify as Emerging Committed Christians.

SPIRITUALLY Open

Many preteens in Canada resonate deeply with their spirituality. More than two-thirds of Gen Alphas (68%) say their faith beliefs, religion or spiritual journey are an important part of their identity. However, non-religious preteens stood in stark contrast to their religious counterparts with only 32% agreeing.

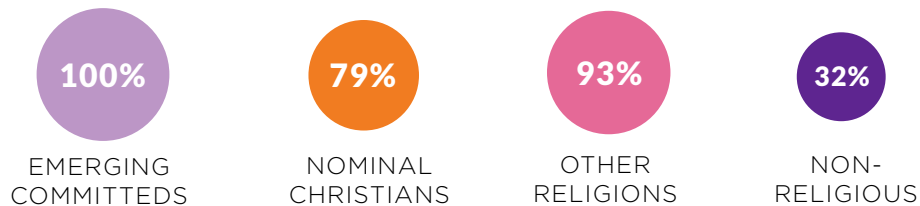
My faith beliefs, religion or spiritual journey are an important part of my identity.



IMPORTANCE OF FAITH



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



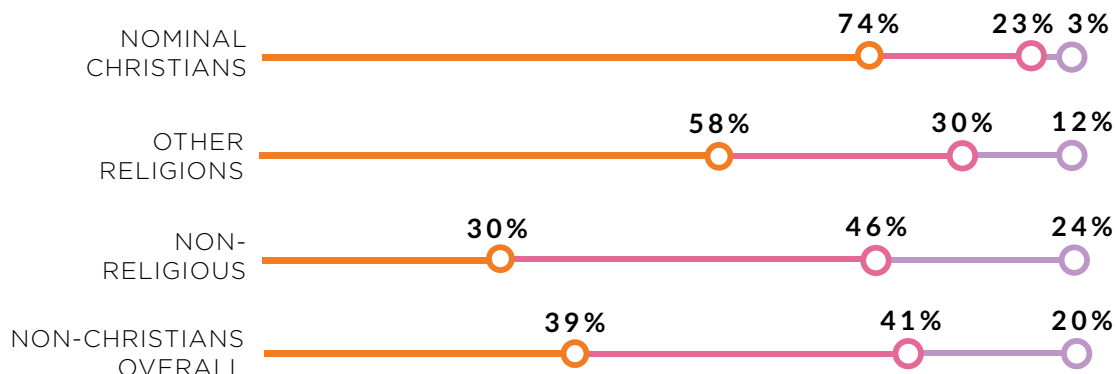
Emerging Committed preteens and those from other religious backgrounds demonstrate the strongest connection to their spirituality. Among these groups, 100% of Emerging Committeds and 93% of preteens from other religions agree or strongly agree that their faith beliefs, religion or spiritual journey are a key part of their identity.

OPENNESS TO CHURCH



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

● YES ● NOT SURE ● NO



However, the spiritual openness we see among this generation does not necessarily extend to religious institutions. Non-Christians demonstrate a noticeable hesitancy about coming to church. Even if invited by a friend, the majority say they are unsure or would not attend. This uncertainty may suggest the need for non-traditional forms of evangelism such as digital or service-oriented outreach.

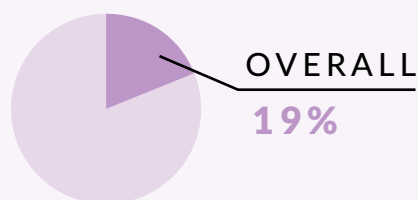
In contrast, Nominal Christian preteens who report not being church attenders show an overwhelming openness to coming to church if invited; 3 in 4 of these young people say they would come. It is encouraging to see that sometimes just reaching out with an invitation can make all the difference.

Gen Alpha

+ SPIRITUALISM

Gen Alpha's openness to spirituality may create opportunities for them to embrace the gospel. However, this openness often extends beyond Christian spaces, sometimes without discernment about the origins or implications of what they encounter. Almost 1 in 5 Gen Alpha preteens are exploring diverse spiritual activities that can profoundly influence their beliefs.

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



ALTERNATIVE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

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

19%

ALL CHRISTIANS

32%

OTHER RELIGIONS

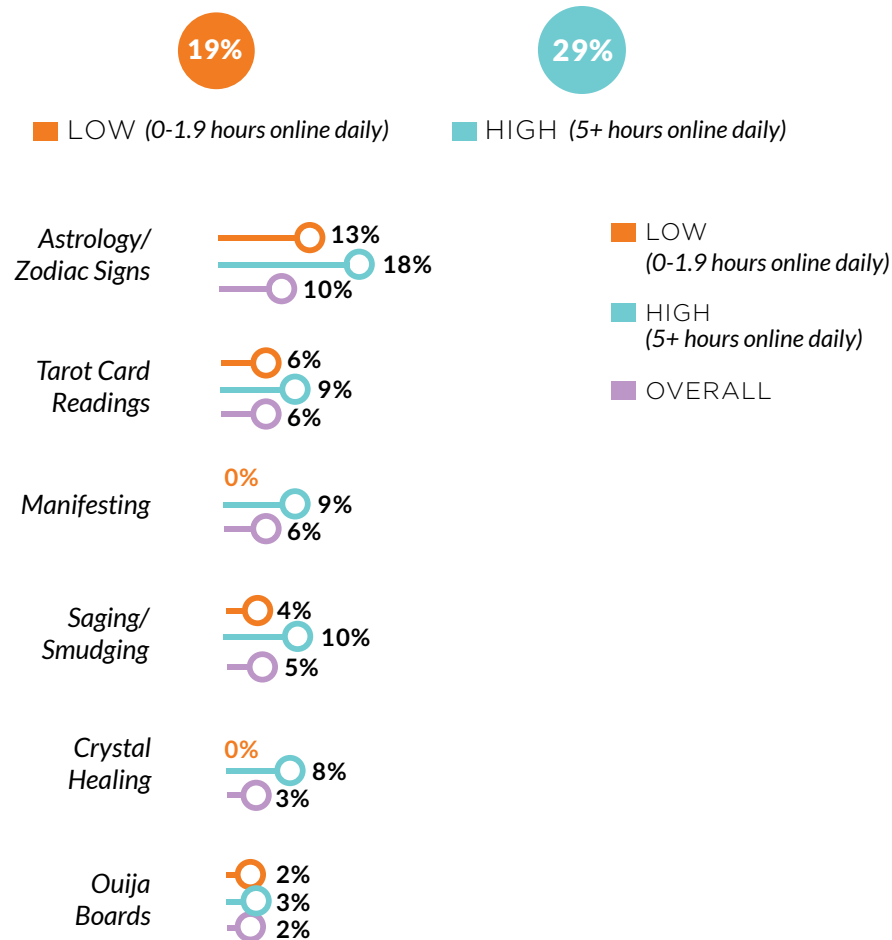
13%

NON-RELIGIOUS

Concerningly, we discovered that an equal number of Christians are also regularly engaging in activities like tarot card readings, astrology/zodiac signs, manifesting, crystal healing, ouija boards or saging/smudging. Among preteens of other religions, this number grows to a staggering 1 in 3.

ALTERNATIVE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES BY TIME ONLINE

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



Preteens who spend a high amount of time online are particularly drawn to such activities as well. This openness to spiritual exploration underscores a need for discernment and biblically-rooted guidance for this generation.



Faith

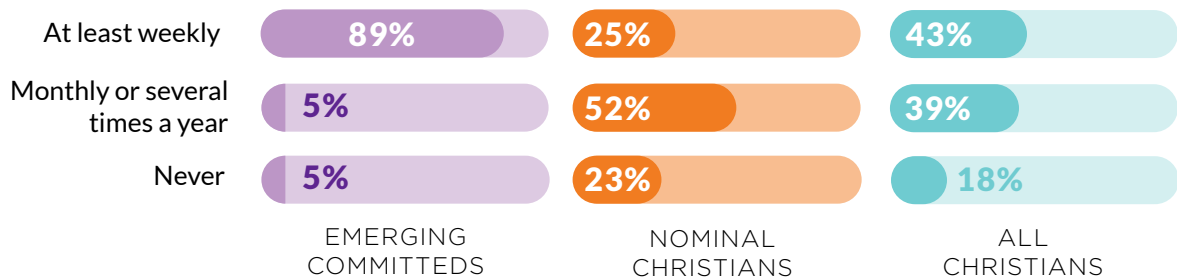
PRACTICES

In addition to their beliefs, we explored this generation's religious practices by measuring habits like gathering with their faith community, reading scripture, praying and having spiritual conversations. Although we asked all preteens about their faith practices, we focus here on the responses from Christian participants rather than their non-Christian peers.

We immediately saw that Emerging Committed Christians consistently integrate these practices into their daily lives.¹¹ In contrast, Nominal Christians show significantly less engagement. Most attend church infrequently, if at all. Notably, 44% never engage with the Bible on their own. Prayer is the most common faith practice among Nominals, though fewer than half pray on their own at least weekly.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

I attend religious services.



THE POWER OF FAMILY

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

Attend church at least weekly:



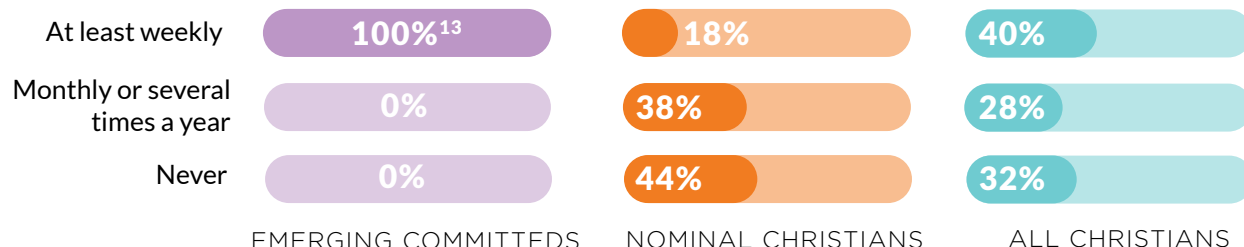
47%
Two Biological Parents

29%
All Other Households¹²

¹¹ Preteens had to read their Bible and pray at least weekly on their own to qualify as an Emerging Committed Christian.
¹² Includes single-parent families, blended families and other living situations.

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

I read or listen to the Bible on my own.



THE POWER OF THE WORD



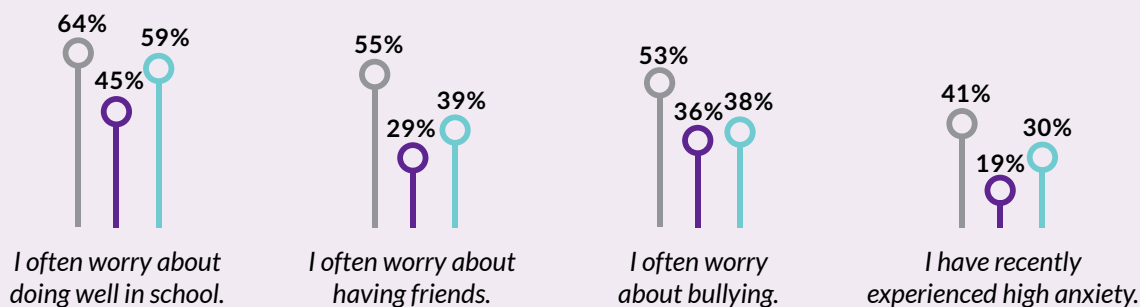
This research showed that regular scripture engagement is clearly linked to improved well-being among young people. Christian preteens who read or listen to scripture weekly or more often are less likely to worry about doing well in school or losing a loved one. They also experience lower levels of anxiety compared to those who never engage with the Bible.

CHRISTIAN PRETEENS RESPOND

■ **I never** read or listen to the Bible.

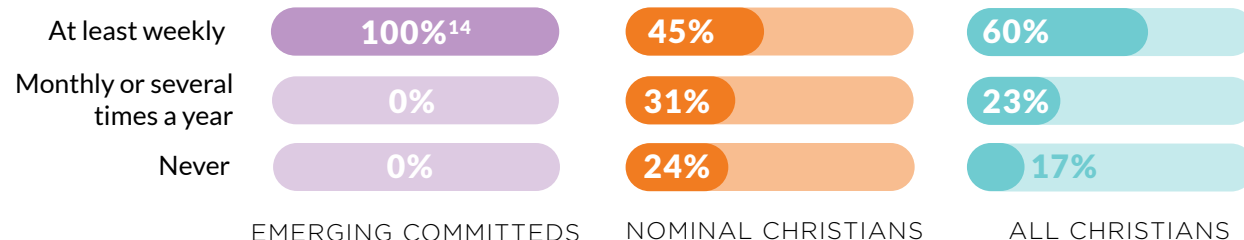
■ I read or listen to the Bible at least **weekly**.

■ Christian preteens overall



PRAYER

I pray on my own.

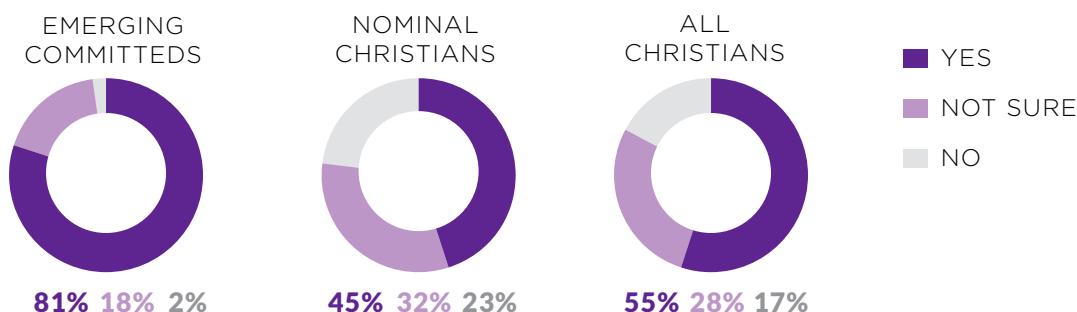


¹³ Preteens needed to select this response to qualify as Emerging Committed Christians.

¹⁴ Preteens needed to select this response to qualify as Emerging Committed Christians.

ANSWERED PRAYER

I can remember a time when God answered a prayer.¹⁵



Encouragingly, many Nominal Christians (45%) recall a specific instance when God answered one of their prayers, though a significant number (32%) remain unsure. All Emerging Committeds report praying at least weekly, with 81% recalling an answered prayer. This connection between regular prayer and recognizing answered prayers is more than a statistic; it is a reflection of a deeper, biblical truth:

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”

– 1 John 5:14 (NIV)

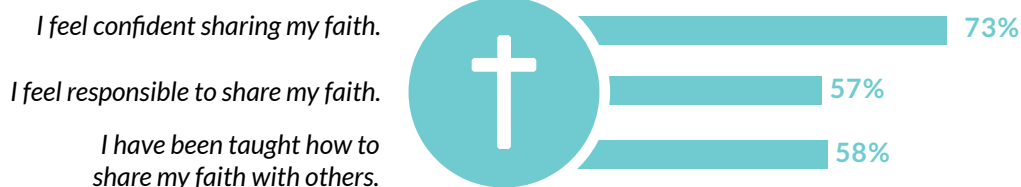
How might we instill this reality in the developing minds and hearts of preteens—that their prayer life is building a foundation that will support their faith for years to come?

Sharing FAITH

We wanted to hear more from Gen Alpha Christians about sharing their faith, so we asked them some questions we did not ask their non-Christian peers. Most Gen Alpha Christians feel confident sharing their faith, with the majority acknowledging a sense of responsibility to do so. This confidence and sense of responsibility may stem from being taught how to share their faith. Encouragingly, more than half say they have been taught to evangelize.

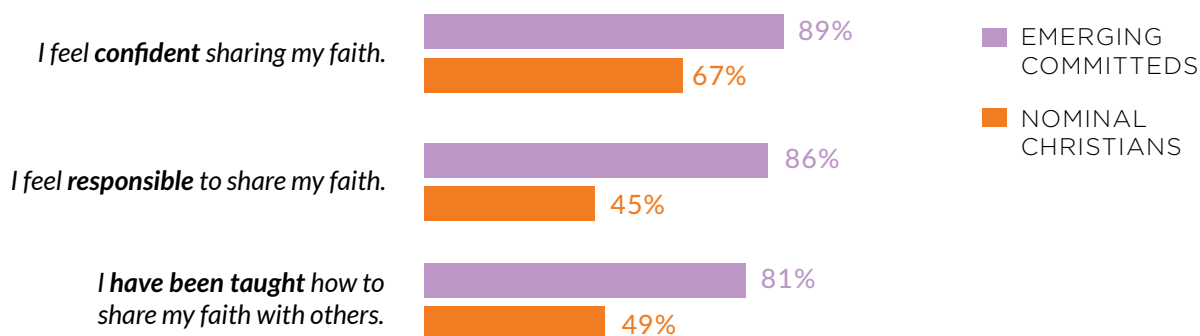
SHARING FAITH

ALL CHRISTIANS



¹⁵ Only preteens who self-identified as Christian were asked this question.

SHARING FAITH BY COMMITTEDNESS

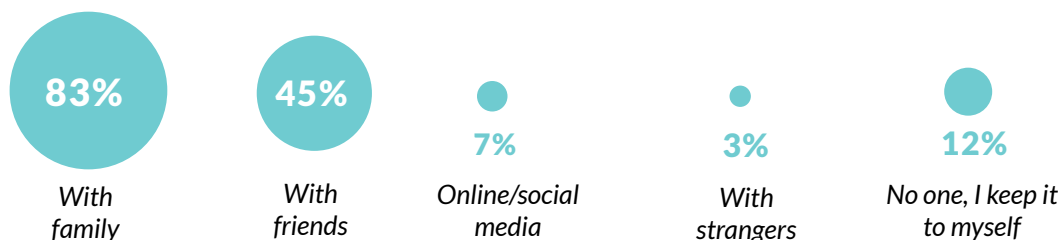


When it comes to how they practically share their faith, there seems to be a divide between Nominal Christians and Emerging Committeds. Nominals who actively share their faith most often do so within their families, while fewer than half say they share faith with their friends—and even fewer in online spaces or with strangers. Meanwhile, Emerging Committeds are much more likely to share their faith than nominal believers, regardless of their environment. It also highlights evangelism as a key marker of a preteen's progress from nominal belief toward a deeper commitment to Christ.

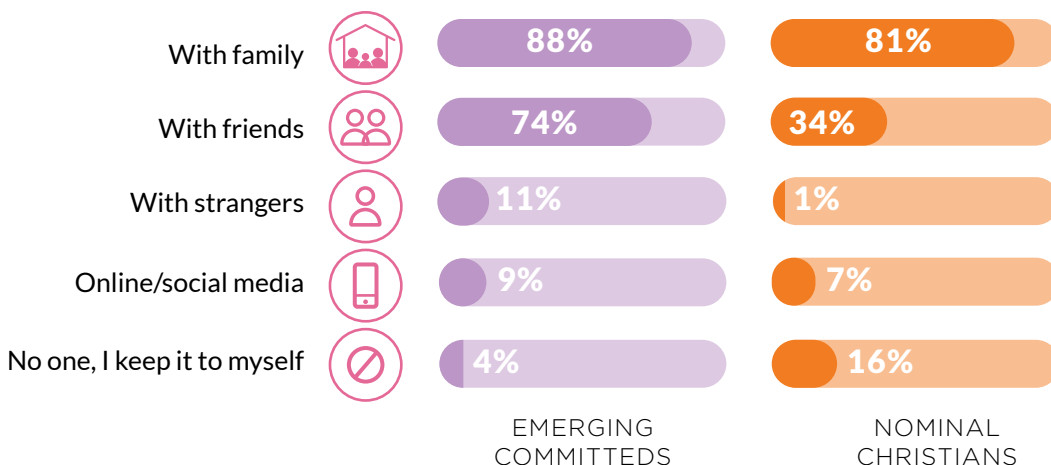
HOW OR WITH WHOM DO YOU SHARE YOUR FAITH?

Select all that apply:

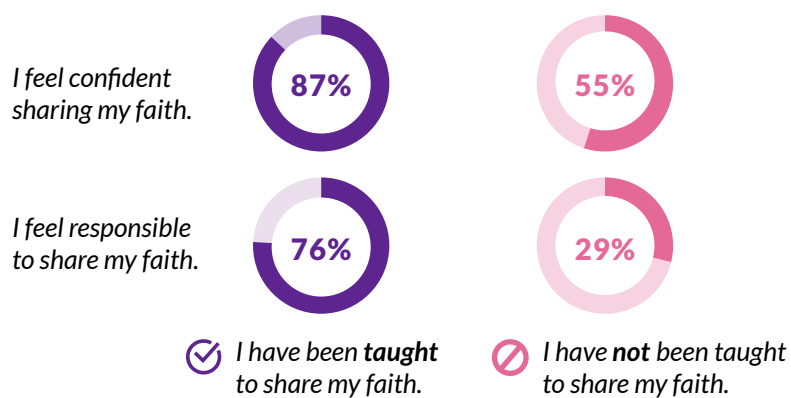
ALL CHRISTIANS



By Committedness:

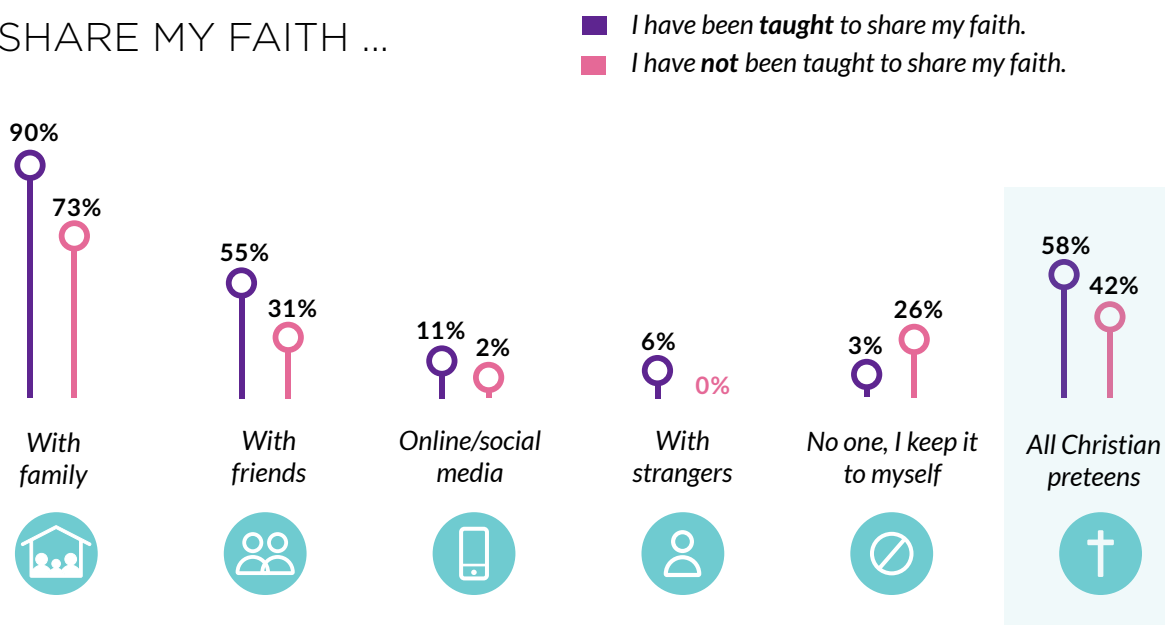


CONFIDENCE SHARING FAITH



Being taught how to share one's faith significantly impacts young people. Those who have received any teaching feel more responsible, more confident and are more likely to discuss their beliefs with family, friends and in online spaces.

I SHARE MY FAITH ...



RESPONDING TO GEN ALPHA



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

- FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS

While most Christian preteens in Canada believe Jesus is the Son of God, fewer affirm belief in a personal God or that the Bible is the Word of God. Even fewer—2 in 5—engage with scripture at least weekly. **Studying God's Word is foundational for developing a resilient faith capable of navigating life's complexities and challenges.** This raises a critical question:

How can we inspire young people to see the Bible as both the authoritative Word of God and a practical guide for their daily lives?

- THE NEED FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Only 14% of the preteens we talked to display the beliefs and habits of committed faith. These include foundational truths and practices such as trusting in Jesus for salvation and regular scripture reading and prayer. This highlights a wider need: most Christian preteens lack these anchors. They need intentional discipleship pathways that move them from inconsistent practices to resilient commitment.

How can we help Nominals grow their faith and build resilience for the challenging teenage years ahead?



- THE ROLE OF CHURCH

Faith communities play a pivotal role in discipleship. Emerging Committed preteens are much more likely than Nominal Christians to regularly attend church, strongly suggesting that **church leaders play a crucial role in bringing young people to Christ and showing them what it means to commit to Him in their daily lives.**

Church leaders, be encouraged. Even when you don't feel like it, your steady ministry is cultivating resilient faith in the next generation.

- SPIRITUAL OPENNESS

Our research points to a **spiritual openness among young people.** A majority of preteens affirm that religion or spirituality is an important part of their identity. While this is highest in Emerging Committeds, many non-Christian young people care about spirituality in some form. This is both an encouraging opportunity and a potential source of vulnerability, as young people have countless options to try and fill that void.

How can we present Jesus to this generation, meet them at their point of need and love them for the rest of their lives without fail?

- CONFIDENT VS. EQUIPPED

Most Christian preteens feel confident sharing their faith, and the majority feel responsible to do so. However, **some preteens have never been taught how to share their faith**, which may impact their ability to put it into practice. Young people can be incredible ambassadors for Christ who share what they believe with enthusiasm and joy, but they need help and encouragement to do this.

How can we raise up strong witnesses among this generation so that they can shine the light of Christ into this dark world?



Family + Influencers

GEN ALPHA
IN CANADA

MEET GEN ALPHA

Meet 11-year-old **Emily**.

Emily lives with her mom and dad in a quiet suburban neighbourhood. Her family is Christian, and her parents are active in their faith. Just last week, her mom prayed with her and read a psalm. They go to church together, and Emily believes in God, Jesus and the Bible, but she doesn't read it much on her own. Her parents encourage honesty, and she usually is—except about gender and sexuality. It feels

awkward, and she's never heard them talk about it. Emily thinks gender is just what a person feels like and that same-sex marriage is fine. When she has questions, she'd rather talk to her counsellor who she recently started seeing—it feels safer.



@litsjust.emily
she/her/hers
Add me on snap 📷

Meet 13-year-old **Jacob**.

Jacob lives in Vancouver with his parents and younger brother. His family is cool, but his friends are everything—he's usually at the mall with them or trying new bubble tea spots. He doesn't care about faith and really never thinks about it since his family and friends don't either. When it comes to big topics like religion, right and wrong or even gender, he's not afraid to talk to his parents.

Recently he's been asking them questions like, "Why do some kids choose violence?" and "Why are some people against gender changes?" He's still figuring things out, but he knows his family will always be there to help him find answers.



@!jamming_jacob
Vancouver 📍 Send your
favourite bubble flavour 🧋

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

97% of Gen Alpha reports a positive family experience.

68% say they can be honest with their parents about what is going on in their lives.

Almost 9 in 10 preteens say they have an adult in their life other than their parent or caregiver who they can go to if they are in trouble.

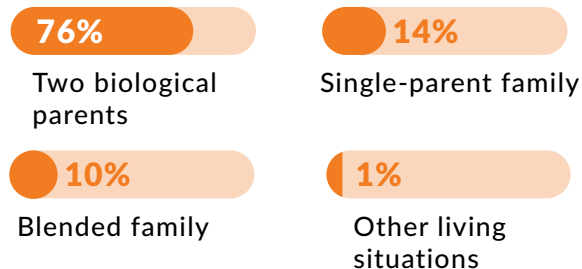
Preteens say **parents** are their **greatest influence** when it comes to life's most important questions.

Relationships

We wanted to learn who is surrounding Gen Alpha and how they feel about those relationships. Overall, young people report positive relationships and strong social support systems. Nearly all say their family experience has been good, and the majority agree they can usually or often be honest with their parents about what's going on in their lives. Additionally, 88% say they have an adult—other than their parent or caregiver—who they can turn to if they're in trouble.

Preteens have also cultivated meaningful friendships, with 91% saying they have friends they can be themselves with. We know from other research that authentic relationships are key to young people thriving, so it is encouraging to see that most Gen Alphas have these relationships in place.

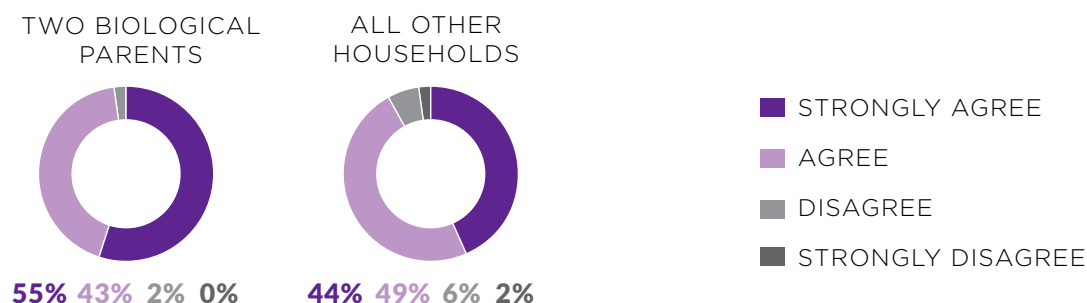
HOUSEHOLD¹⁶



97%
OF PRETEENS
SAY THEIR FAMILY
EXPERIENCE HAS
BEEN GOOD.

FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Overall, my family experience has been good.

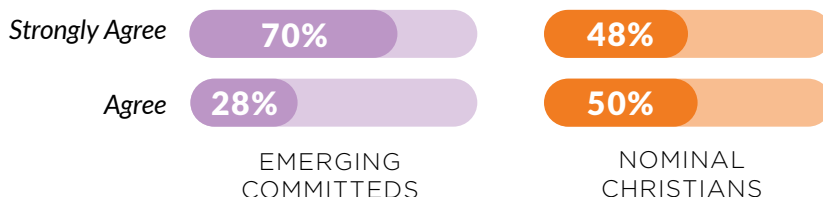


While most Gen Alphas report a positive family experience, this varies slightly by household type. Our research showed that most preteens live with both biological parents, while a smaller percentage are being raised in single-parent or blended families. Preteens living with both biological parents are more likely to strongly agree that their family experience has been good compared to those living in other household types. Still, across all households, more than 9 in 10 preteens agree that their family experience has been good overall.

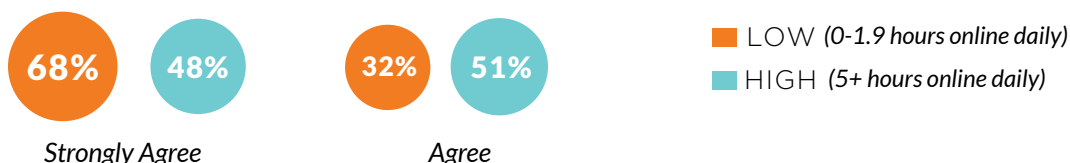
¹⁶ Census data collected in 2021, shows that 71% of Canadian children ages 0 to 14 were living in a two-parent family, while 20% were living in a single-parent family and 9% in a blended family. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/page.cfm?topic=4&lang=E&dguid=2021A000011124>

FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Overall, my family experience has been good.



By Time Online:



We did see noticeable differences in family experience when looking at faith commitment and time spent online. Emerging Committed Christians are much more likely than Nominal Christians to strongly agree that their family experience has been good. Similarly, preteens who spend less than 2 hours online daily are far more likely to strongly agree than those who spend 5+ hours online. While we can't say for certain why this is the case, it is an interesting insight into Gen Alpha's familial and digital lives.

THE POWER OF CLOSENESS



It can be overwhelming to think about raising children in this world. We want them to be safe, healthy, feel loved, thrive in their identity and purpose, make good decisions and—of course—follow Jesus. How do we accomplish all of this? There are no guarantees for parenting outcomes in a world that grows more complex daily. But this is actually not a new problem. Research tracking families across four generations¹⁷ has identified three critical factors in parents who successfully pass a family's faith to the next generation:

- **Warm Relationships:** Cultivating closeness in shared, safe spaces.
- **Open Conversations:** Courage to create space to hear and be heard.
- **Authentic Modelling:** Walking with Jesus and inviting children to walk with you.

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

¹⁷ Vern L. Bengtson, Norella M. Putney, and Susan Harris, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down Across Generations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

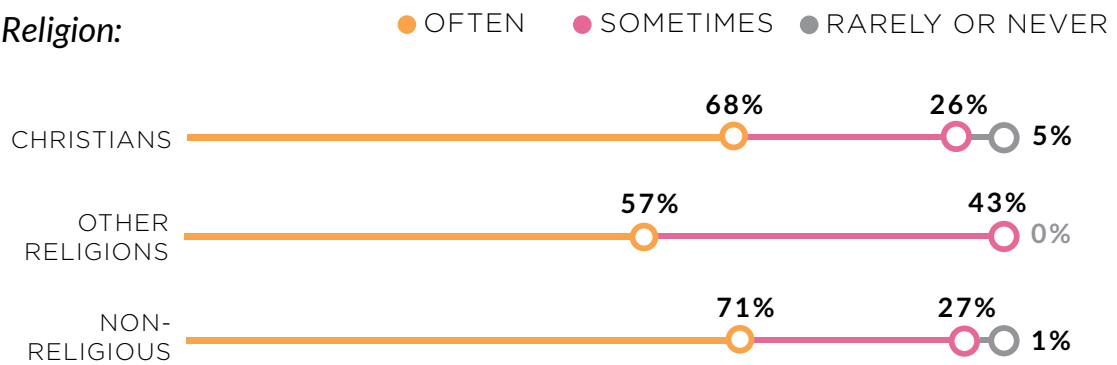
FAMILY CONVERSATIONS

I feel like I can be honest with my parents about what is going on in my life.¹⁸

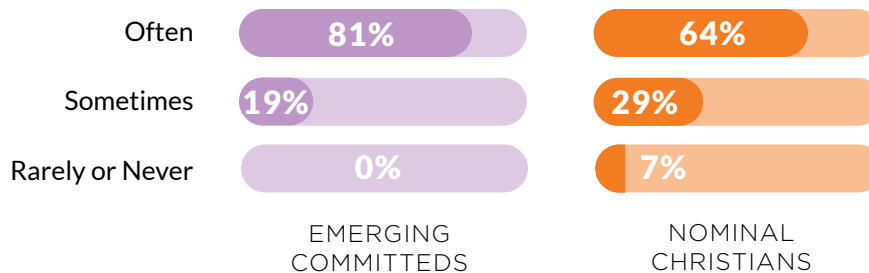


It was encouraging to see that Gen Alpha reports being close to their parents. Around 2 in 3 preteens say they feel comfortable being honest with their parents about what is going on in their life, and this holds true across both age and gender.

By Religion:



By Committedness:

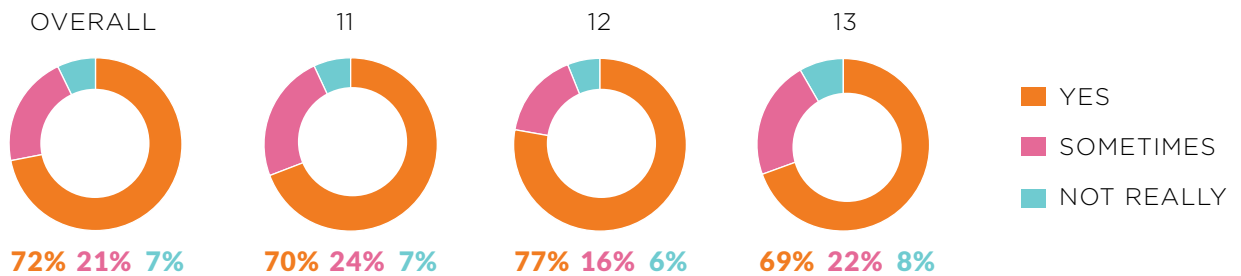


The biggest factor influencing whether preteens have an open relationship with their parents appears to be faith. Preteens from a religion besides Christianity are less comfortable sharing honestly with their parents. In contrast, Emerging Committed Christians are much more likely to report an open relationship with their parents than Nominals.

¹⁸ This question used a sliding scale from 1 to 10. Responses were grouped into three categories: scores of 8-10 were categorized as "often", 4-7 as "sometimes", and 1-3 as "rarely or never."

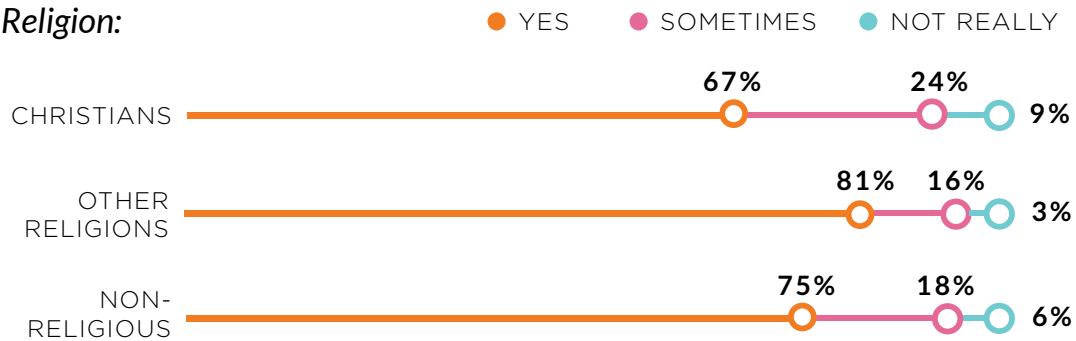
FAITH CONVERSATIONS

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

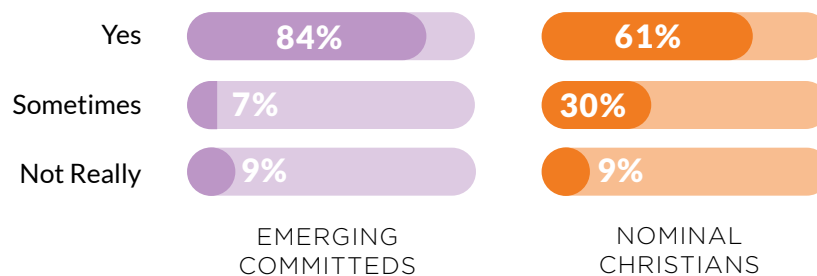


We see similar trends when it comes to preteens' questions about faith specifically. The majority say they feel comfortable asking any questions about faith within their family. Both boys and girls report feeling this way. Preteens of all ages appear comfortable bringing up these topics—especially 12-year-olds.

By Religion:



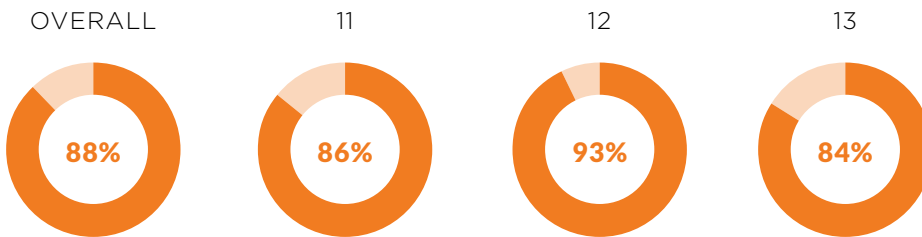
By Committedness:



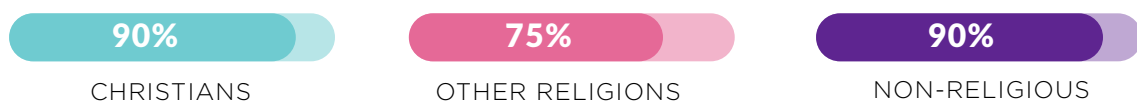
Again, faith plays a significant role here—though interestingly, preteens from other religions report feeling the most comfortable asking faith-related questions within their families. Among Christians, those who are more committed to their faith feel more comfortable asking these kinds of questions than those who are nominal in their beliefs.

CARING ADULT PRESENCE

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



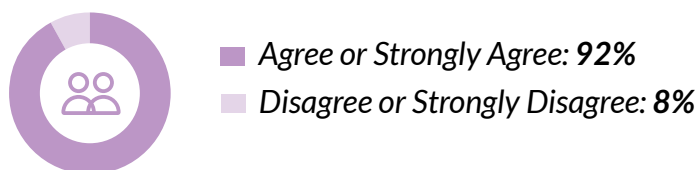
By Religion:



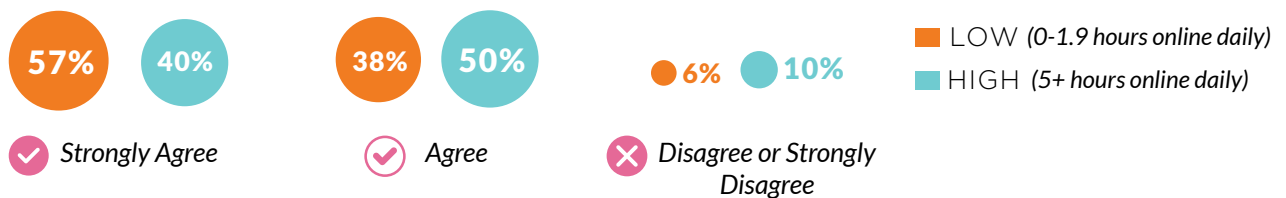
In addition to positive family relationships, Gen Alpha has strong social support systems. A majority of preteens—7 in 8—say they have an adult in their life, besides their parent or caregiver, who they can go to if they are in trouble. Once again, this did not change much by gender, but 12-year-olds were the most likely to agree compared with other ages. Preteens from religious backgrounds other than Christianity are less likely to have a trusted adult in their life, suggesting they may be in greater need of positive adult role models.

FRIENDSHIPS

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



By Time Online:



Finally, Gen Alpha has built authentic relationships with their peers. Over 9 in 10 say they have friends they can be themselves with. This was the case across the board; however, we did notice that high screen users were less likely to strongly agree.

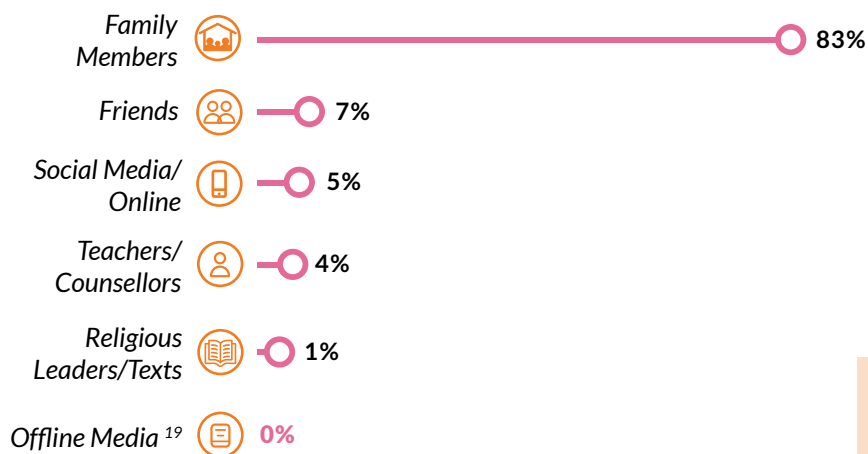
Who Gen Alpha LISTENS TO

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

When it comes to questions about right and wrong, the overwhelming majority of Gen Alpha take their questions straight to family members. Comparatively few preteens say they go most often to friends, the internet, teachers or religious leaders. Older preteens are slightly less likely to go to family, opting instead to go more often to friends, social media or online or to their teachers or counsellors. Christian preteens are more likely than those from other religions to look to family for guidance on right and wrong, though there is little difference between Emerging Committed Christians and Nominal Christians in this area.

RIGHT AND WRONG CONVERSATIONS

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



83%

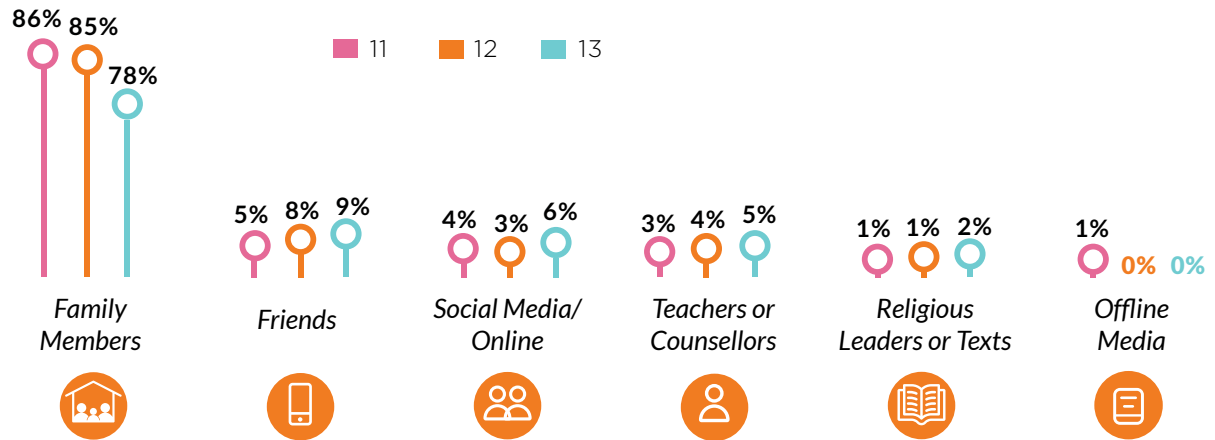
OF GEN ALPHA
RELY ON FAMILY
FOR ADVICE
ABOUT RIGHT
AND WRONG.

¹⁹ Offline media include books, magazines, television, radio or newspapers.

QUESTIONS ABOUT RIGHT AND WRONG

Where I go most often for information or guidance about **right and wrong**...

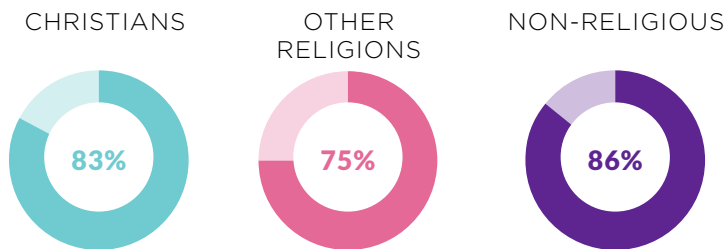
By Age:



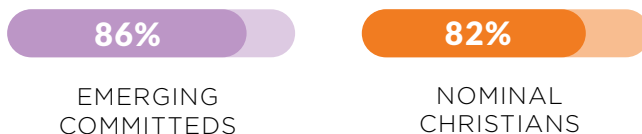
FAMILY INFLUENCE

I go to family members most often for information or guidance about right and wrong.

By Religion:



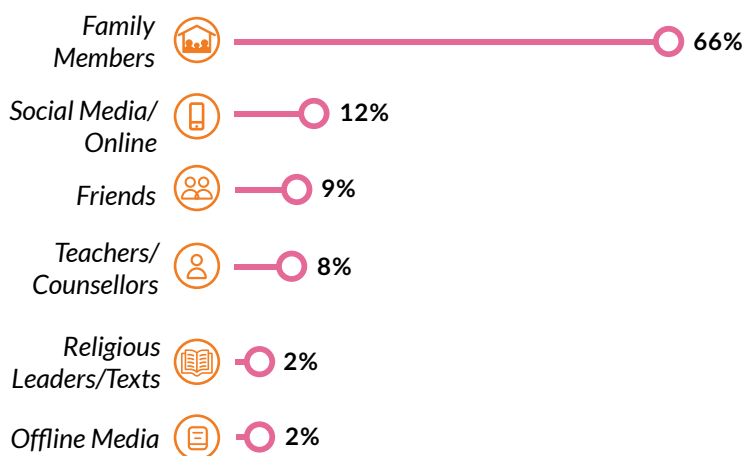
By Committedness:



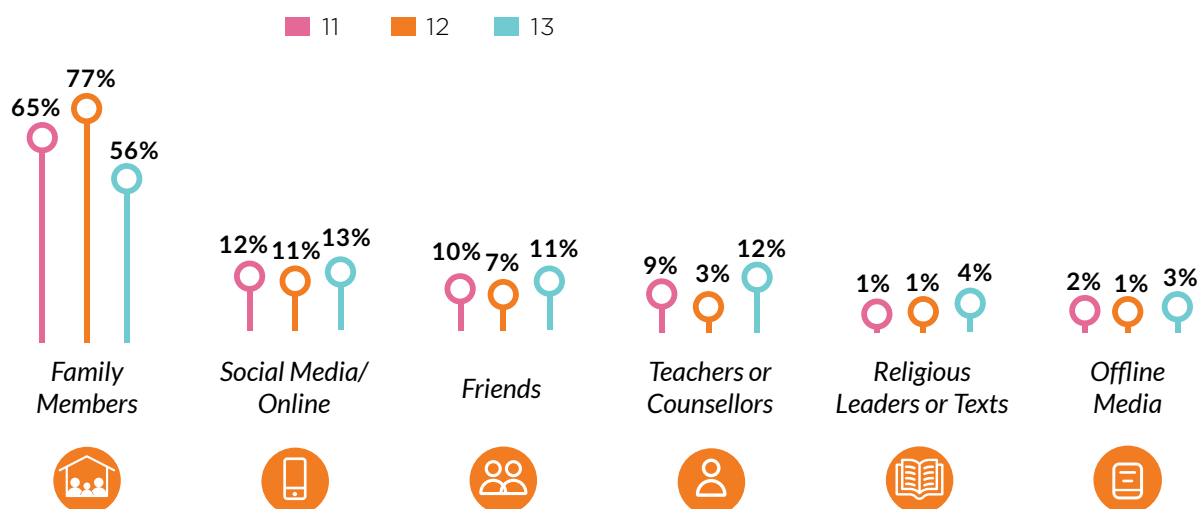
When it comes to questions about gender and sexuality, family is once again Gen Alpha's top choice for advice—although just over 1 in 10 say they are going online with these questions. Religious leaders or texts and offline media are the least likely sources a preteen turns to with questions about gender and sexuality. Interestingly, 12-year-olds are the most likely to go to family members with these questions, and boys do so more than girls.

GENDER AND SEXUALITY CONVERSATIONS

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



By Age:



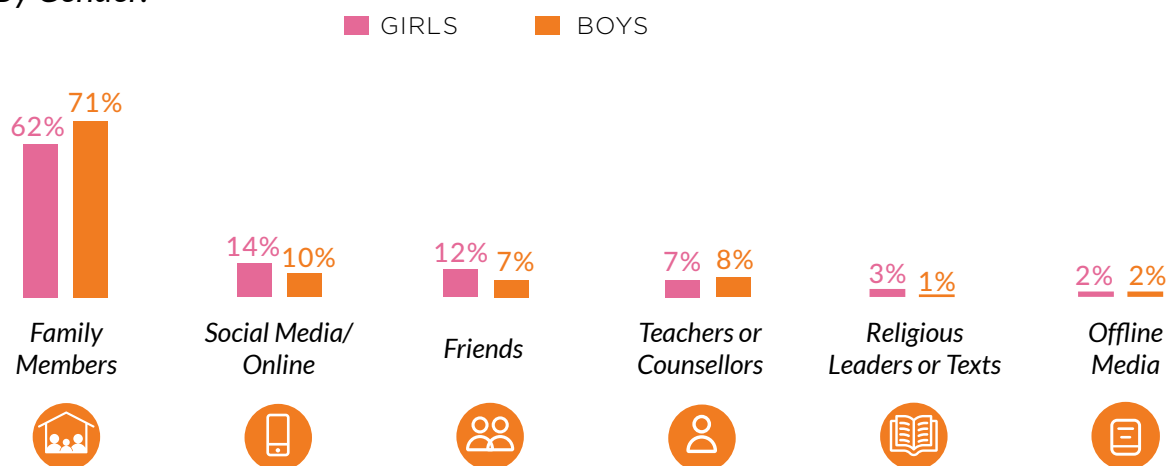
There were only minor differences by faith for this question. Non-religious preteens were more likely than Christians to go to the internet with their questions, while Christians were more likely to go to religious leaders or texts. A preteen's commitment to their Christian faith makes little difference in how likely they are to consult their family.

The strongest indicator of where a preteen will go with their questions about gender and sexuality appears to be time spent online. Preteens who are online more than 5 hours a day are much less likely than their peers to seek guidance from family members. Instead, they are more likely to turn to the internet or to other relationships, such as friends, teachers or counsellors.

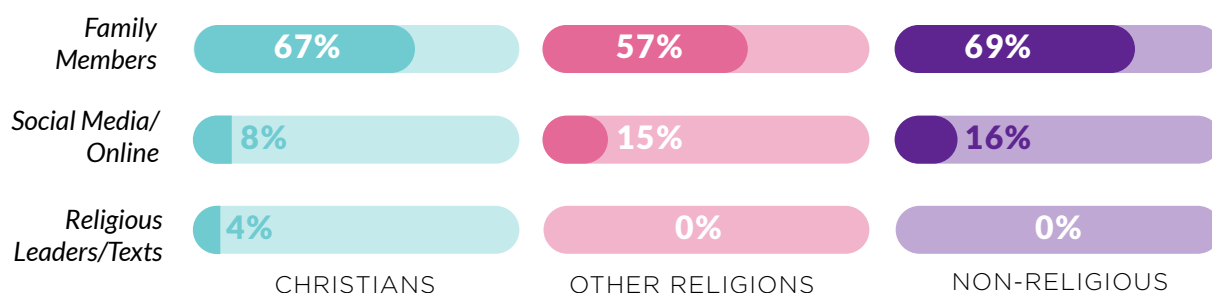
QUESTIONS ABOUT GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Where I go most often for information or guidance about gender or sexuality ...

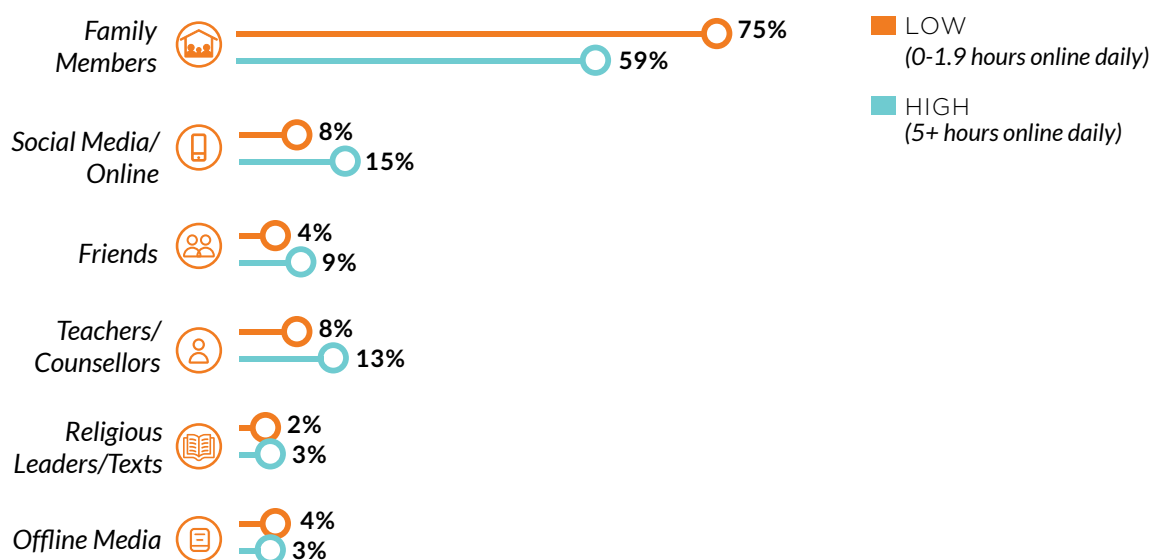
By Gender:



By Religion:



By Time Online:



Faith

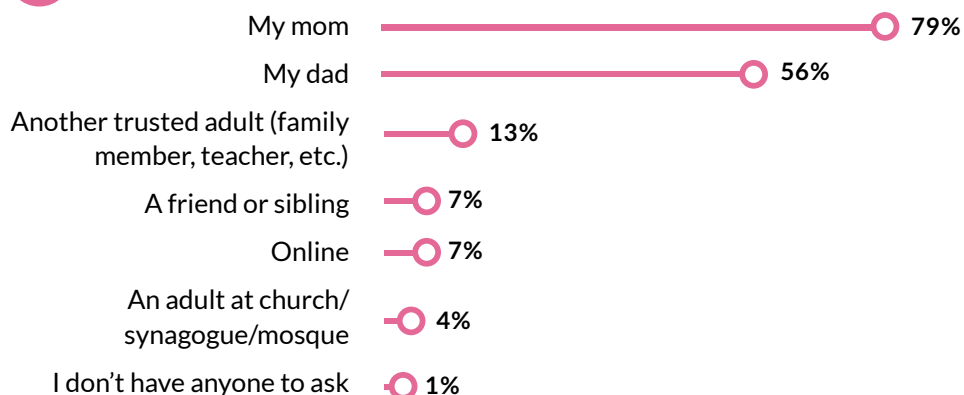
INFLUENCES

We asked Gen Alpha who they turn to for questions about religion or God. As with other topics, family members—specifically parents—top the list. Almost 4 in 5 preteens choose their moms, while more than half choose their dads. Perhaps most encouraging is that nearly all of Gen Alpha say they have someone to turn to for questions about religion or God. Parents' influence seems to lessen as children grow older, with nearly one in ten 13-year-olds saying they go to friends, siblings or the internet instead. Girls are more likely than boys to have built relationships with trusted adults besides their parents.

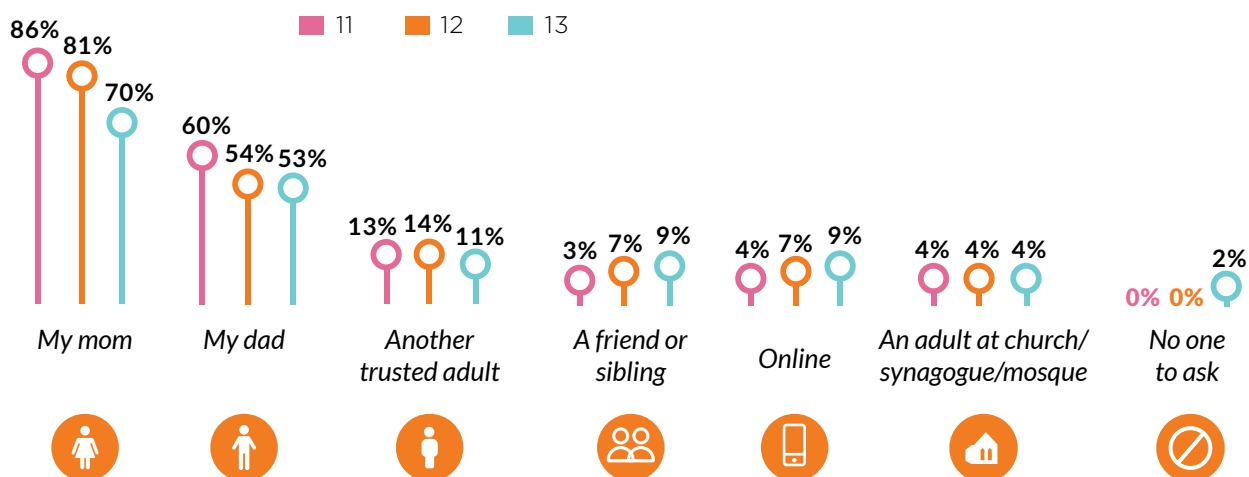
RELIGIOUS CONVERSATIONS



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



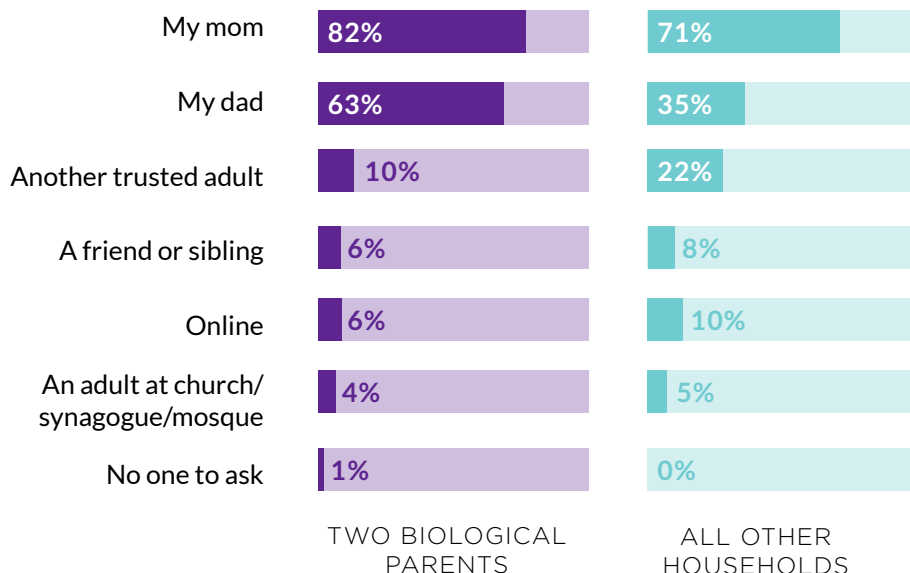
By Age:



QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD



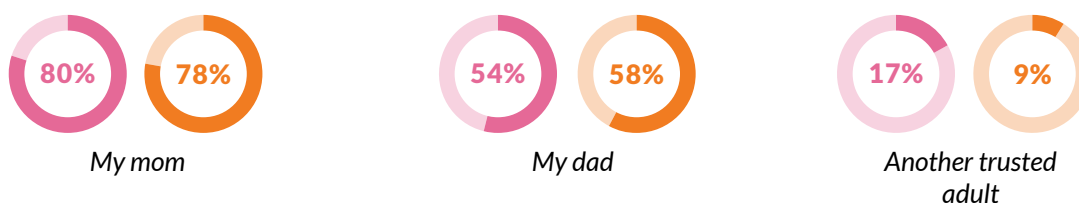
When I have questions about religion or God, I usually ask (select up to two):



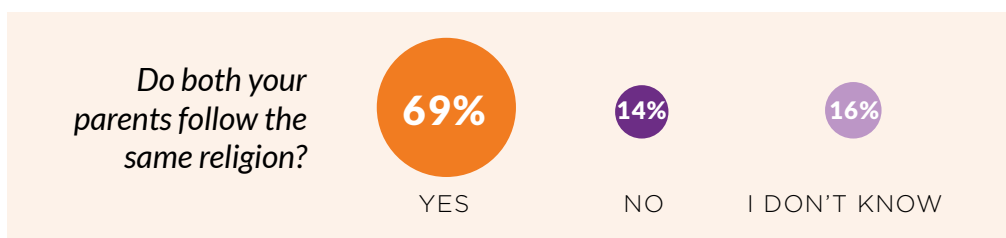
A preteen's home life greatly affects who they turn to for advice. While moms and dads have fairly equal influence when both are present in the home, dads are sought out far less in other living arrangements. Young people who are not living with both biological parents are more likely to turn to another trusted adult or to the internet for guidance on matters of faith.

By Gender:

■ GIRLS ■ BOYS



Given parents' influence over faith matters, it is worth noting that almost 1 in 3 preteens say their parents either do not follow the same religion (14%) or they aren't sure (16%). This may create confusion for kids seeking clarity about their own beliefs.



PARENTS TAKE HEART

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

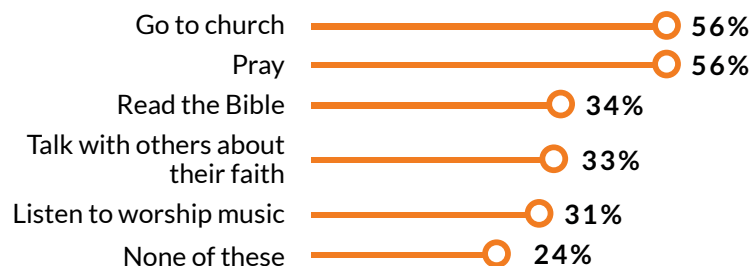
While you might expect other voices to rank higher on Gen Alpha's influence list, family comes first and is the primary guide in children's lives. Parents should take heart that their voice matters in their children's lives.

Who Gen Alpha IMITATES

Talking about faith is one thing, but modelling it is even more powerful. We explored the example parents set for their children and how that affects Gen Alpha's habits and perspective. It is troubling to note that only half of Christian parents attend church and pray regularly, and only a third read their Bible and talk with others about faith. Almost a quarter of Christian preteens report that they don't see their parents doing any of these things.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS' FAITH LIVES

What religious activities do your parents regularly do (if any)?²⁰



Perhaps unsurprisingly, preteens reflect their parents' faith practices in their own lives. We see this pattern across several categories including Bible reading, prayer and sharing their faith. Preteens whose parents engage in these disciplines are more likely to be committed to their own faith and practice the same behaviours.

²⁰ Only preteens who self-identified as Christian, or who indicated their parents are Christian, received this question.

BIBLE READING

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



Among all Christian preteens, less than half report that their parents read or listened to the Bible with them in the past week. This rises sharply to 84% among Emerging Committed Christians and drops to just 27% among Nominal Christians. Preteens whose parents read the Bible with them—or who simply observe their parents reading scripture—are significantly more likely to read the Bible on their own each week.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON BIBLE READING

■ I READ THE BIBLE ON MY OWN AT LEAST WEEKLY

*My parents **read** the Bible with me.*



*I **see** my parents read the Bible.*



*My parents **don't read** the Bible with me.*

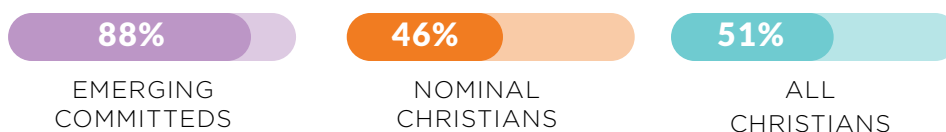


*I **don't see** my parents read the Bible.*



PRAYER

*My mom or dad read **prayed** with me this week.*



We see similar patterns when it comes to the discipline of prayer. About half of Christian preteens say they prayed with a parent in the past week, with Emerging Committed preteens much more likely to do so and Nominal Christians much less. Preteens who pray with their parents—or who observe their parents praying—are far more likely to pray on their own.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON PRAYER

■ I PRAY ON MY OWN AT LEAST WEEKLY

*My parents **pray** with me.*



*I **see** my parents pray.*



*My parents **don't pray** with me.*

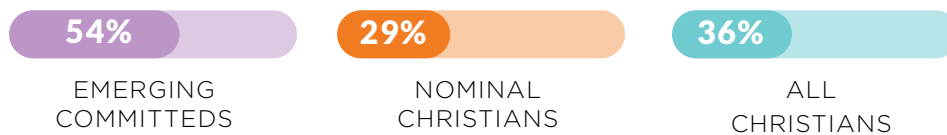


*I **don't see** my parents pray.*



SHARING THEIR FAITH

I have seen my parents share their faith.

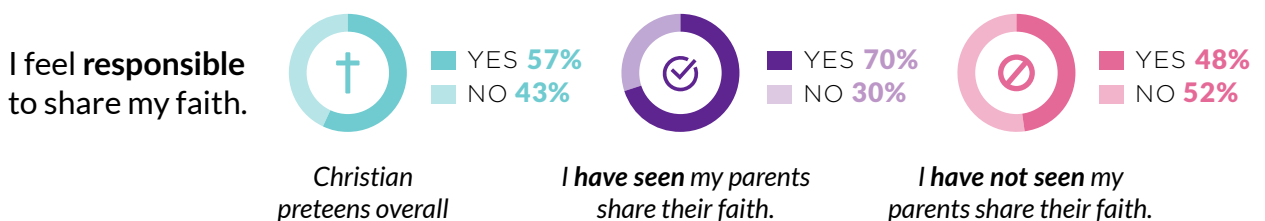
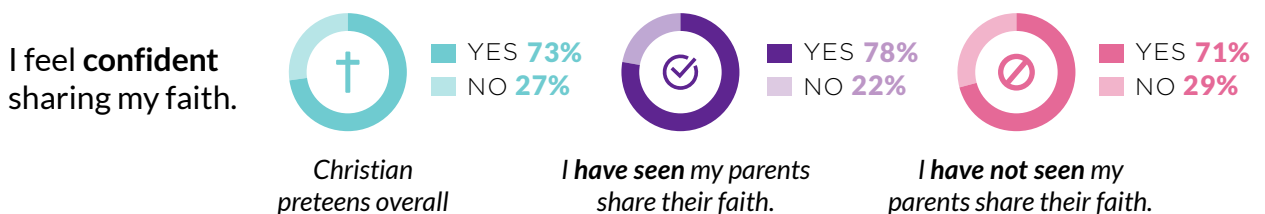
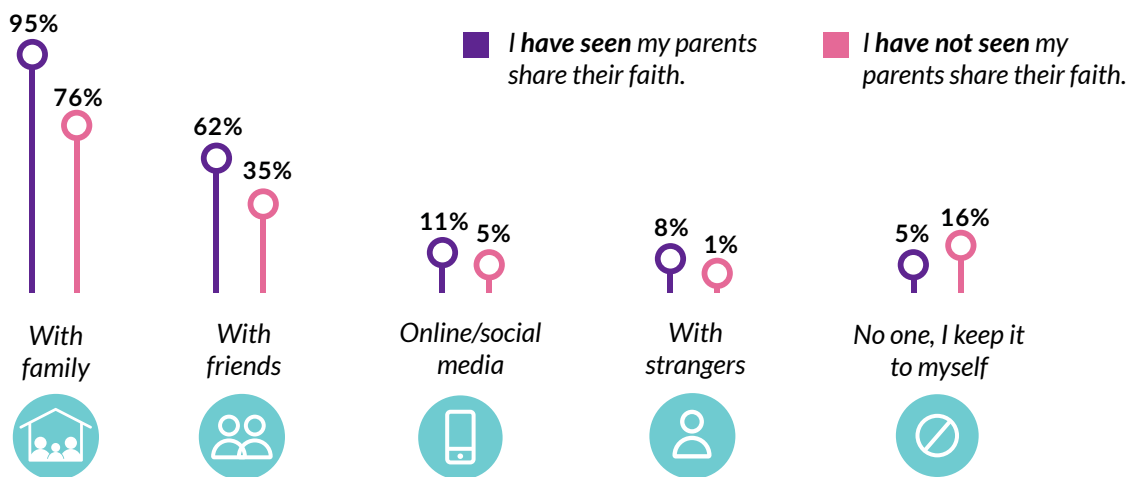


Finally, this trend appears in evangelism as well. Emerging Committed preteens are much more likely than Nominals to see their parents share their faith. Christian Gen Alphas are also more likely to share their faith with friends, online and even with strangers if they have recently seen their parents model that behaviour.

As noted in the previous section, Christians generally feel confident sharing their faith, and this confidence doesn't vary much based on parental influence. However, preteens report feeling a stronger sense of responsibility to share their faith when they regularly see their parents talking about theirs.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON SHARING FAITH

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



RESPONDING TO GEN ALPHA

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

- **STRONG SUPPORT NETWORKS**

Encouragingly, Gen Alpha reports many positive relationships. Almost all say they have friends with whom they can be genuine. Most have at least one adult other than their parents who they can go to if they are in trouble. This is good news! **Supportive connections are critical** as preteens get older and increasingly look beyond their parents for information and advice.

How can we establish strong, trusted relationships that will see Gen Alpha through future challenges?

- **FAMILY AS A FOUNDATION**

Preteens report that parents are their primary influence, **trusting their families to guide them in answering life's most important questions**. Family members and caregivers should not take lightly their privilege of speaking into their children's lives, especially while they are young and looking to listen. The Church should also take this data seriously.

How can we support parents and other family members to step into their important role of discipling this generation starting at home?



- EQUIP FAMILIES FOR CONVERSATION

Most preteens report a positive family experience and feel comfortable being honest with their parents and asking questions about faith. Today's parents often take a casual approach to spiritual conversations—using everyday moments like car rides—and give their children **space to explore without pressure**, unlike previous generations.²¹ This blend of relational warmth and intentionality creates a strong environment for faith to take root in Gen Alpha.

How can we help parents make these everyday moments spiritually meaningful? What tools or encouragement might build their confidence to guide their children in faith?

- LIVE BY EXAMPLE

It is no secret that actions speak louder than words. Preteens not only listen to their parents, but they also watch what they do. For Gen Alpha, **having parents who live out their Christian faith is crucial** to their own spiritual journey. Perhaps the best thing parents can do is to grow their own faith and model it transparently for their children.

How can we encourage parents in foundational spiritual disciplines like reading the Bible, praying and sharing their faith so that Gen Alpha comes to see these as natural parts of the Christian life?

²¹ In their research study, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada explored how to better support evangelical parents in nurturing their children's faith at home. Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, *Helping Parents Form Faith*, accessed March 31, 2025, <https://www.crcna.org/news-and-events/news/helping-parents-form-faith>.



Their Digital Lives



MEET GEN ALPHA

Meet 12-year-old **Ella**.

Ella's parents just got her a smart phone, mainly to keep in contact with them, but Ella didn't care why—she was just so excited to get one! Now, she spends as much time as she can on YouTube and Instagram until the screen-time lock pops up. She wishes she could have more time, but she's still searching online for a good way to get around it.

Ella's home life is good, but she doesn't always feel like she can be real with her parents. She hasn't told them she's been feeling a lot more lonely, sad and anxious lately.

She'd also never tell them about the boy at school who showed her some bad stuff online. Since then, she's looked up more of it and is way too embarrassed to talk about it.

Meet 11-year-old **Nathan**.

Nathan spends 5 hours a day online after school, mostly watching YouTube and gaming on his iPad. He doesn't have close friends, so being online just feels better. There's not much else to do in his town anyway. He's close with his mom and pretty close to his stepdad. Neither of them believes in God, and he's not really sure what he thinks either. He's heard about Jesus but doesn't know much—just that some people say He's important.

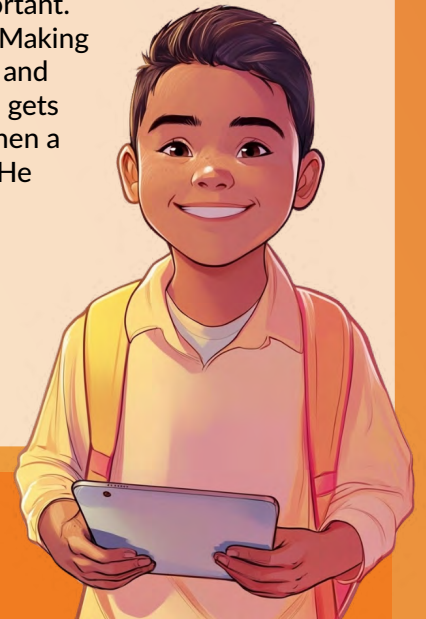
His biggest worries? Making friends, losing family and bad weather. Nathan gets especially anxious when a big storm is coming. He still remembers how bad Hurricane Fiona was and wonders if something like that could happen again.



@!ella&ollie

Pods in  
Ollie is my world

@!ghost.mode.nate



WHAT WE DISCOVERED

Preteens **average** over **3 hours** online daily outside of schoolwork.

1 in 5 preteens are high internet users, spending **more than 5 hours online** daily outside of schoolwork.

While over half say they feel good about the amount of time they spend on a screen, **27%** say they would be **on screens more** if they could.

Gen Alpha spends time **gaming** every day in addition to **chatting** with friends and checking their **social media**.

35% of 11-year-olds and **42%** of 12-year-olds list **TikTok** as their top platform, even though they are too young to have an account.

Preteens

+ SCREENS

We cannot talk about Gen Alpha without talking about technology. Researchers have been tracking Gen Alpha's tech use basically from birth. Nearly all Canadian children have been exposed to screens by the age of 2,²² with most using screens for at least 1 hour a day by age 3.²³ Among 12- to 13-year-olds, 8 in 10 own their own smartphone, with half getting their phone between ages 11-13, and about a third receiving it even earlier.²⁴

Parents report giving their child a smartphone not because they were begging for one, but primarily because parents want to be able to keep in touch with their child.

We asked young people to tell us how many hours they usually spend online daily outside of schoolwork. Gen Alpha tells us they spend, on average, 3 hours and 18 minutes online daily. Time online varies by age, with younger preteens spending less time online compared to their older peers.

TIME ONLINE DAILY

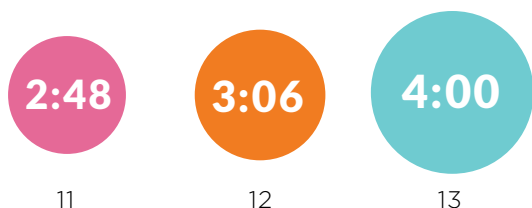
During a typical day, how many hours do you spend online outside of schoolwork?



At first glance, this number may seem small, but when considered in context, it represents a significant part of a preteen's daily routine.

TIME ONLINE DAILY BY AGE

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



²² Michelle Ponti, Canadian Paediatric Society Digital Health Task Force, "Screen Time and Preschool Children: Promoting Health and Development in a Digital World," *Paediatrics & Child Health* 28, no. 3 (May 16, 2023): 184–202, <https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-preschool-children>.

²³ Valerie Carson, Kellie, M. Langlois, and Rachel Colley, "Associations Between Parent and Child Sedentary Behaviour and Physical Activity in Early Childhood," *Health Reports* 31, no. 2 (February 19, 2020), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32073643/>.

²⁴ MediaSmarts, "Young Canadians in a Wireless World, Phase IV: Life Online," 2022, <https://mediasmarts.ca/research-and-evaluation/young-canadians-wireless-world/ycww-phase-iv/young-canadians-wireless-world-phase-iv-life-online>.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF GEN ALPHA



Let's break down a typical day for Gen Alpha as we follow 12-year-old **Ella**.

It's **3 pm**, and the final bell has just rung. Ella waves goodbye to her friends and quickly heads out the school doors, phone in hand as she looks for her mom, who's waiting in the SUV. She's barely seated before scrolling through Instagram during the short drive home. Though she has her phone with her all day for checking assignments or researching during class, this is the first time she gets to scroll just for herself. Ella's mom tries to ask about school, but Ella and her stepbrother offer only quick, distracted answers, eyes glued to their screens. Mom doesn't mind much; she's multitasking herself, catching up on emails via Bluetooth.

At home, Ella tosses her backpack by the door, grabs a snack, and settles onto the couch. She pulls up **YouTube**, quickly losing track of time as autoplay cycles through her favourite channels. Her mom gently reminds her to finish homework before dinner, so Ella reluctantly switches off her screen and gets started on her math homework. Meanwhile, her younger brother is already playing **Minecraft** with his friends online, his frustrated scream briefly startling her from down the hallway. She quickly opens **TikTok**, records her annoyed face with loud screams in the background, and posts the clip.

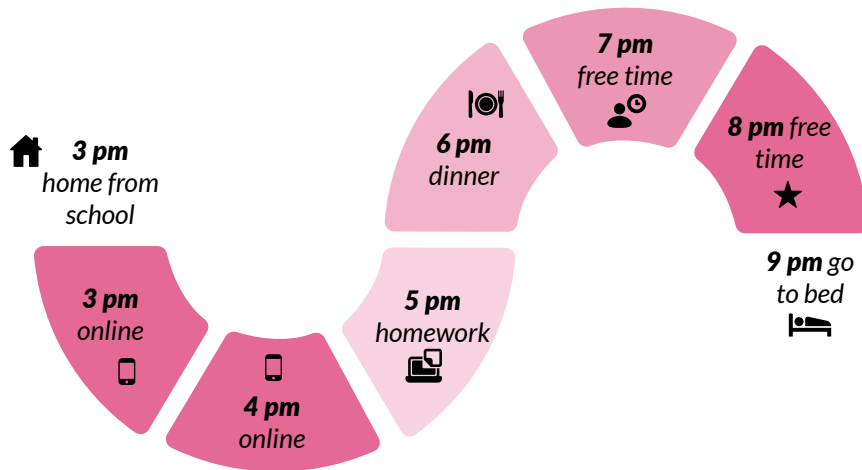
Around 6, Alexa announces that dinner is ready. Devices aren't allowed during family meals, so Ella plugs her phone in to charge and heads to the kitchen. Over dinner, the family discusses school, upcoming hockey practice and weekend plans. The whole family helps clean up after dinner, then they head outside to take Ollie on a quick walk. Afterward, she quickly returns to her room to finish the rest of her homework, then hops back on YouTube **around 8**, watching videos while playing **Roblox** for her last hour of screen time. Although her parents don't want her to use her phone before bedtime, she feels like there isn't much else to do. By the end of the day, Ella's screen-time report shows over **3 of her 6 free hours** that day spent on her phone. For her, it feels like no time at all—just part of everyday life.



Individual habits vary, of course, as do family cultures. Not every 12-year-old has their own phone, but Ella's daily routine is a pretty fair summary for a lot of Gen Alpha.

DAILY ONLINE RHYTHMS

While not specifically measured in the research, a day in the life of Gen Alpha could look like this:



We received a wide variety of responses from preteens about how much time they spend online. To help us understand the differences, we categorized them into low (less than 2 hours online daily), medium (2-4.9 hours daily) and high (5+ hours daily). Nearly 1 in 5 preteens are high users, spending an average of 6 and a half hours online daily outside of schoolwork.

Throughout the study, we observed notable connections between high screen time and other concerning trends, such as poor mental health or increased worries. While we can't say for certain that one causes the other, the patterns suggest that heavy online engagement may be linked to shifts in how preteens think, feel and experience the world.

AVERAGE TIME ONLINE DAILY



TIME ONLINE CATEGORIES



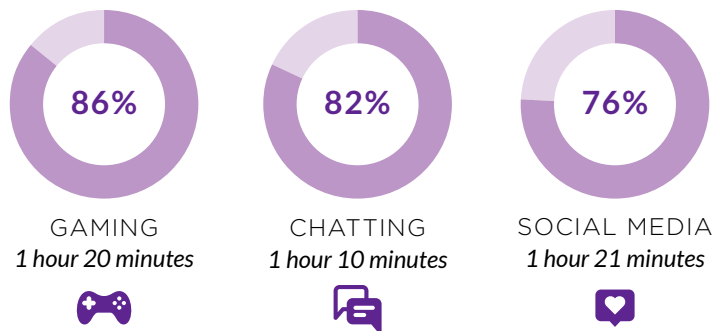
Online

ACTIVITIES

So, what exactly is Gen Alpha doing on their phones all day? Besides watching video content, preteens say their number one online activity is gaming, followed closely by talking, messaging or video chatting and social media.²⁵

ONLINE ACTIVITIES

I do this every day ...

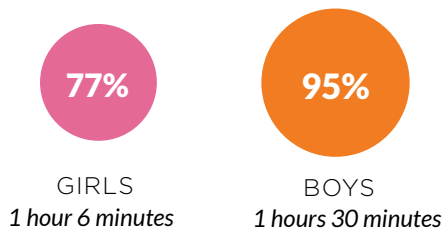


Boys are more likely to game every day and spend more time gaming on average than girls. Girls, on the other hand, are more likely than boys to spend time chatting every day.

GAMING



I do this every day ...

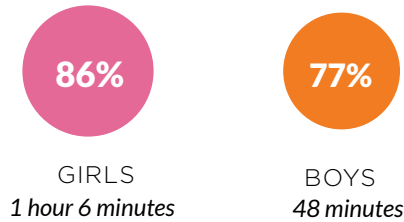


²⁵ We did not specifically ask about the amount of time spent watching video content since videos are so integrated into online activities.

Older preteens are more likely to engage in chatting and using social media than younger preteens. Interestingly, over half of 11- and 12-year-olds report using social media daily despite not being allowed to have social media accounts.²⁶ Unsurprisingly, high internet users spend much more time on every online activity compared to low internet users.

CHATTING

I do this every day ...



SOCIAL MEDIA

I do this every day ...



DAILY AVERAGES BY TIME ONLINE



²⁶ Preteens might be referring to YouTube Kids here, which does not have a minimum age requirement of 13. However, 76% of 11- and 12-year-olds chose a platform other than YouTube as their most used. Additionally, we do not know if they are using their own account or a parent's account.

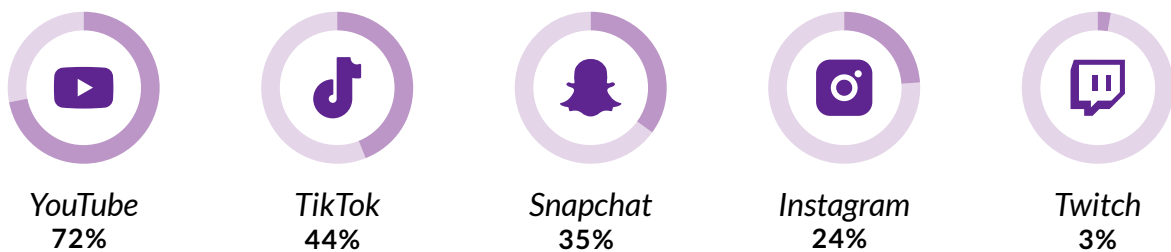
Social

MEDIA USAGE

Despite platform policies, Gen Alpha is active on social media. A 2019 study found that 86% of Canadian youth aged 9-11 have an account on at least one platform that requires users to be 13 or older.²⁷ Our own research confirms this. Despite the minimum age requirement, Gen Alpha apparently has no issue with adjusting their birthdate to get access.

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DO YOU USE THE MOST?

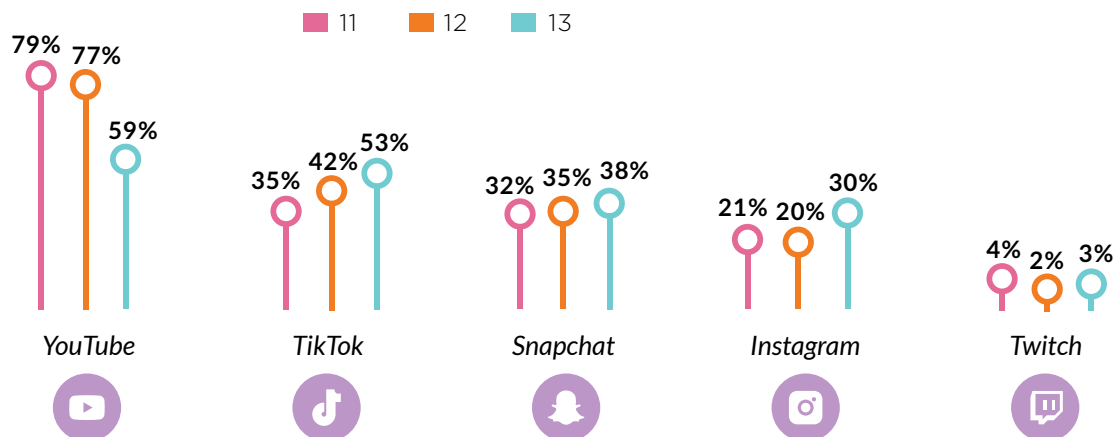
Select up to two:



Over 3 in 4 preteens use social media daily, mostly YouTube. More than a third of 11- and 12-year-olds say TikTok is one of their favourites, and about a third choose Snapchat. However, we see a big shift among 13-year-olds. Fewer of these teens choose YouTube, preferring TikTok, Snapchat or Instagram instead.

MOST USED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BY AGE

Select up to two:

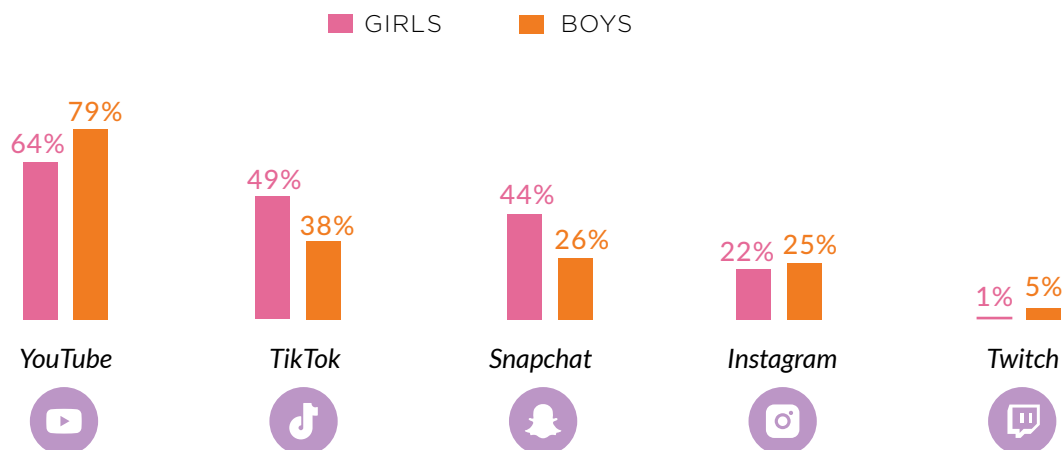


27 MediaSmarts, "Young Canadians in a Wireless World."

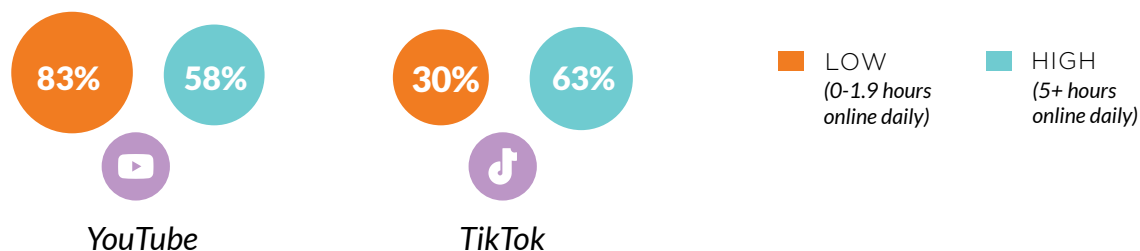
We also noticed differences by gender and time spent online. Boys prefer YouTube the most, while girls lean slightly more towards TikTok or Snapchat. Additionally, preteens who spend 5 hours or more online daily are twice as likely to prefer TikTok compared to those who spend less than 2 hours online. Low internet users mostly prefer YouTube. This could hint at TikTok's addictive nature or simply show that the more time preteens spend online, the more likely they are to spend some of it on TikTok.

MOST USED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BY GENDER

Select up to two:

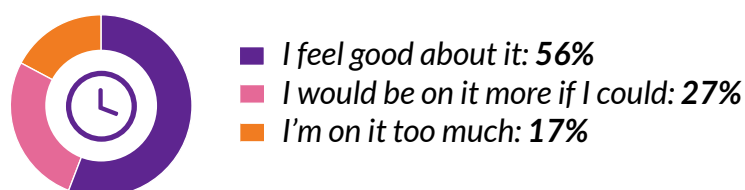


TOP TWO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BY TIME ONLINE



When reflecting on their screen time, almost 3 in 5 preteens say they feel good about the amount of time they spend on screens. Over a quarter express a desire for more screen time, and just under 1 in 5 acknowledge too much time on screens.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR SCREEN TIME?



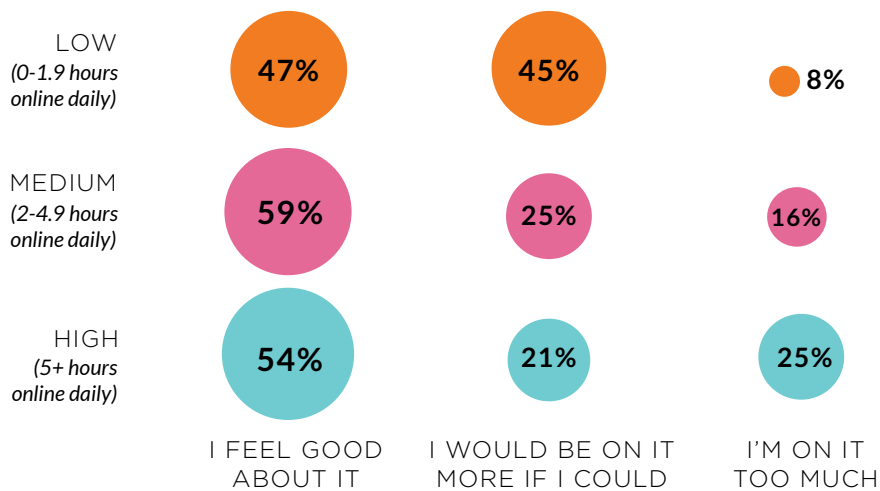
Those who spend the least time online are the least likely to feel satisfied—nearly half wish they had more screen time. But in contrast, preteens who spend more time online seem conflicted about their screen time. A quarter say they are on it too much, but an almost equal number want more time. This points to a complex relationship between screen habits and self-perception.

OVER HALF
OF GEN ALPHA
FEEL GOOD
ABOUT THEIR
SCREEN TIME.

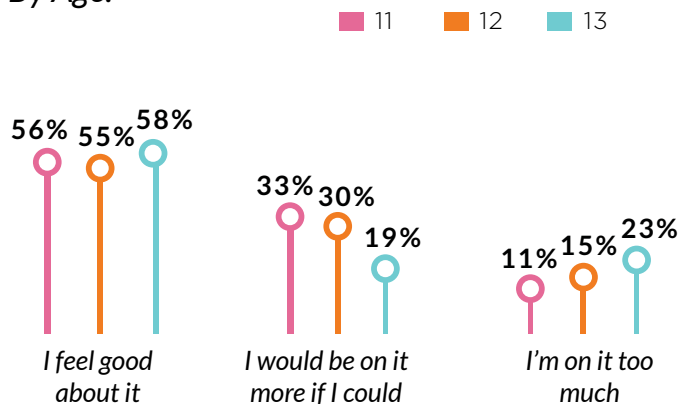
SCREEN TIME PERCEPTIONS

How do you feel about your screen time?

By Time Online:



By Age:



While we might expect digital usage to be highly individual, the research shows trends by age. Younger preteens—especially 11-year-olds who spend the least time online—often wish they had more screen time. By age 13, however, attitudes shift. Although they're the heaviest internet users of this age group, 13-year-olds are twice as likely as 11-year-olds to feel they're spending too much time online. This shift in perception may reflect growing self-awareness or perhaps something else entirely. It raises interesting questions about how preteens develop digital boundaries as they get older.

RESPONDING TO GEN ALPHA



Digital is definitely Gen Alpha's world, and will likely continue to be so as they get older. This generation relies on digital platforms to stay connected with friends and spends much of their free time online.

- GEN ALPHA GAMERS

Any young person you meet is likely to be a gamer. **Almost 9 in 10 preteens say they play games online daily.** Boys are more likely than girls to say they play daily, but still a lot of girls are logging on too. An easy way to connect with preteens is to ask what they are playing and why they like it. Their answers can reveal a lot about their interests and can open the door to more conversation.

How can we show genuine curiosity about the games preteens love and the time they are putting into them? How can we interact in that online space?

- VIDEO IS KING

YouTube and TikTok are a central platforms for Gen Alpha and play a significant role in shaping their views and interests. While videos can be both educational and entertaining, the variety and easy access to so much content presents challenges. **Young people are being exposed to a wide range of perspectives** that may not be wise, biblical or true.

How can we find and promote fruitful content so that young people on YouTube or TikTok have creators to follow who are both enjoyable and God-honouring?



- SOCIAL MEDIA STARTS YOUNG

Despite age restrictions, many 11- and 12-year-olds use platforms like TikTok and Snapchat, spending over an hour each day on them. There is no question that **social media shapes us and can have serious consequences** for young people's self-image, comparison and vulnerability to bullying. We need to be alert to how our preteens are engaging with these platforms and the choices they are making online.

How can we help them use these powerful platforms for positive connections and creative expression while being cautious of their addictive nature and the temptation to compare themselves to others?

- SCREEN TIME ISN'T SIMPLE

Many Gen Alpha preteens report feeling positive about their screen time, but quite a few think they aren't getting enough time on a device or are actually spending too much time. There is plenty of research and respected voices sounding the alarm about screen time's potential harms. Avoiding technology isn't really an option, but we can encourage our young people to **pay attention to the effects** that digital engagement may be having on them and express it. We can also think with them about the kinds of habits that feel healthy and model them in our own lives.

How might you, within your own family, approach this topic together in a way that feels collaborative rather than restrictive?



Sex + Gender

GEN ALPHA
IN CANADA

MEET GEN ALPHA

Meet 13-year-old **Abigail**.

Abigail lives in a small coastal town where not many people are like her. Recently, she's been thinking about using a nickname, something that feels more like her, because she doesn't really see herself as a girl. She trusts her parents and knows she can tell them anything, but it's harder with friends—she doesn't have many she can fully be herself with. After school, she spends about 3 hours a day online, mostly on TikTok and Snapchat. She's started to wonder if it's too much time, but TikTok helps her feel less lonely. It's one of the only places where she sees people who feel the same way as her. Even so, she's been feeling lonelier and more anxious lately and isn't sure what to do about it.





@!blurred_edges
can't be boxed 

Meet 12-year-old **Mason**.

Mason says he's Christian, but it doesn't mean much to him. His family goes to church a couple of times a year because his mom likes having some moral structure, but he never sees his parents read the Bible or pray. Mason mutters a prayer every week, but he can't remember a time God answered one. He's more into astrology than Christianity. Mason spends a lot of time online, mostly on PlayStation. One of his online friends is exploring their sexuality, so he's been looking through social media to understand. He's unsure about same-sex marriage or transitioning but thinks gender is what a person feels like—who's to say otherwise?



@!masonmecrazy
he/him/his  
message me to join
my Discord

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

2 in 3
preteens say
gender is the
sex a person
was born as.

58% think it is
okay or might be
okay for someone
to change their
body to become a
different gender.

Almost **2 in 3**
preteens believe
premarital sex
is okay or might
be okay.

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

Of any age group,
13-year-olds are
the most likely
to have **viewed
pornography** or
to know a friend
who has.

VIEWS ON Gender

Gender identity is a regular topic of conversation for this generation, beginning at an early age. Compared to previous generations, Gen Alpha is more likely to encounter and personally engage with questions of gender and sexuality from a young age. So, we wanted to understand their perspective.

When asked what gender is, 67% say the sex a person was born as. However, 58% say it is okay or maybe okay for someone to change their body to a different gender. These findings suggest that Gen Alpha holds a range of views on gender identity at this stage of their development.

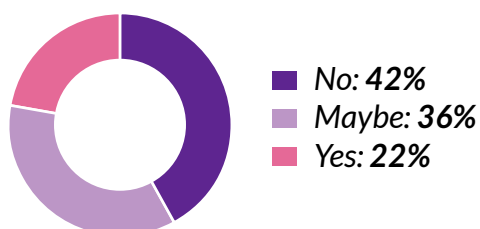
VIEW OF GENDER IDENTITY

I think gender is ...



VIEW OF GENDER CHANGE

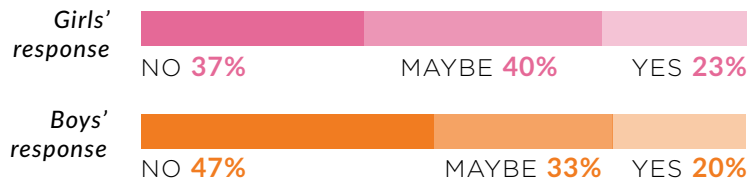
Is it okay for someone to change their body to become a different gender?



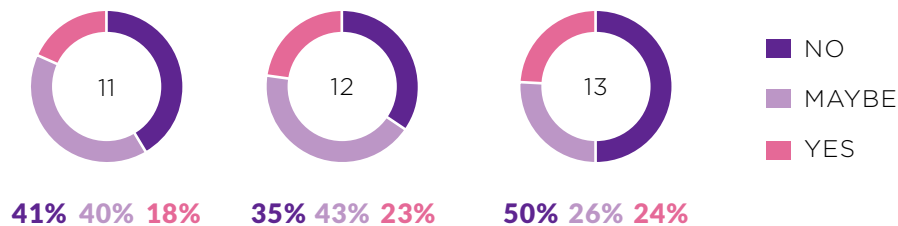
Young people's views on this topic vary based on their own gender and age. Boys are more likely than girls to say gender change is not okay, while girls are more likely to express uncertainty. Among all age groups, 13-year-olds are the most established in their viewpoints, with half saying gender change is not okay.

GENDER PERSPECTIVES

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

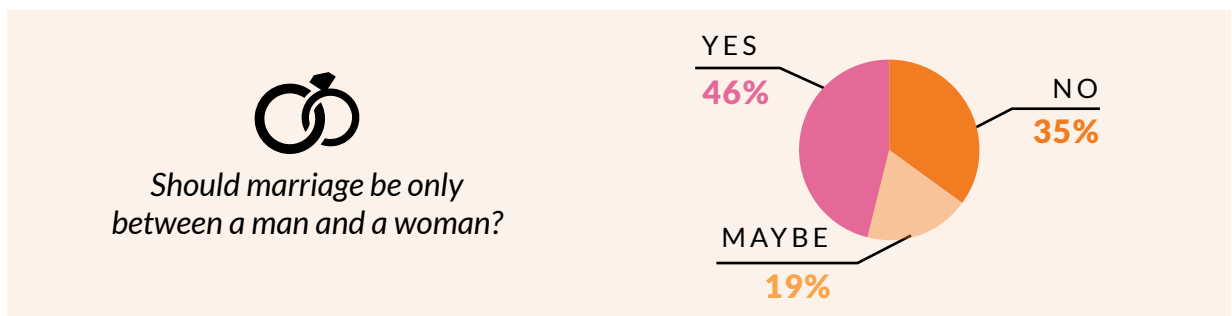


By Age:

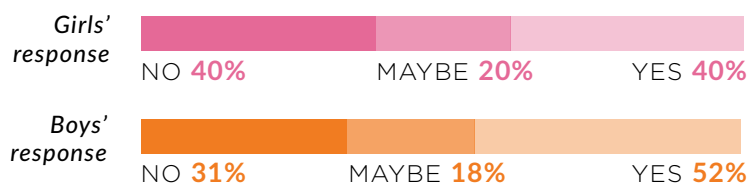


Views on SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

In addition to views on gender identity, we asked preteens about their perspectives on same-sex marriage: 54% of Gen Alpha preteens say same-sex marriage is okay or might be okay. Views do not vary significantly by age, but girls are slightly more likely than boys to express openness toward same same-sex marriage.

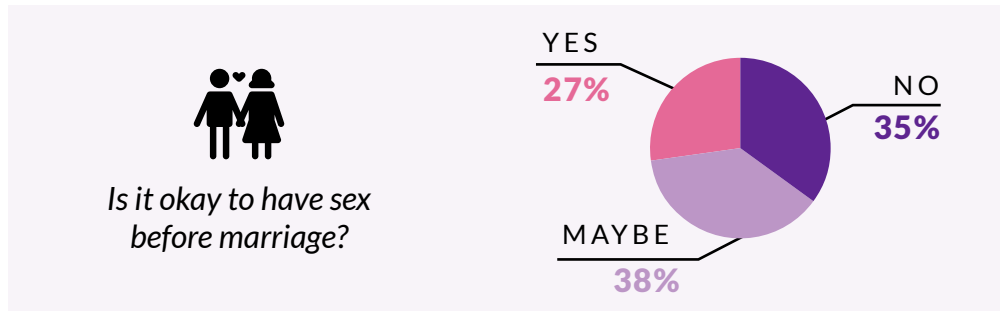


By Gender:

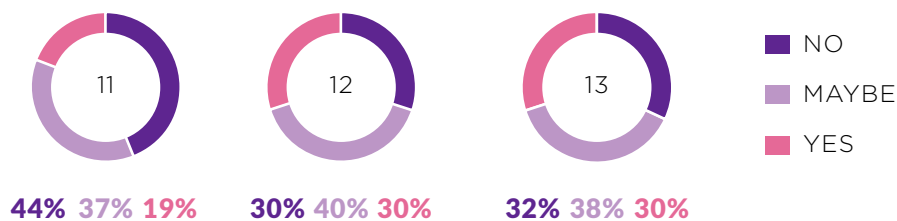


Views of PREMARITAL SEX

The majority (65%) of Gen Alpha preteens say it is okay or might be okay to have sex before marriage. Views on premarital sex are similar across genders. Younger preteens are the most opposed to premarital sex, whereas older preteens are more likely to say it is okay.



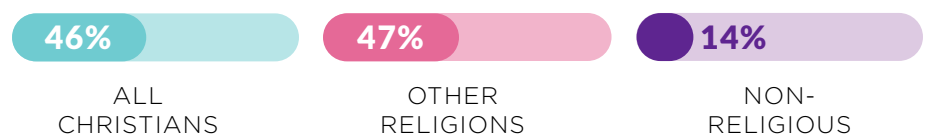
By Age:



Christians stand apart from their non-religious peers in their belief that premarital sex is not acceptable. This conviction grows with commitment to faith. Emerging Committed Christians are about twice as likely than Nominal Christians to say premarital sex isn't okay.

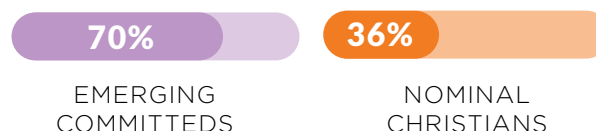
THE FAITH FACTOR

It is **not okay** to have sex before marriage.



Views by Committedness:

It is **not okay** to have sex before marriage.



Personal EXPERIENCES

In addition to sharing their views on gender and relationships, preteens shared personal experiences in these areas: 9% report that they identify as a gender different from what they were assigned at birth, and 6% of preteens indicate that, when thinking about dating, they would look to date someone of the same sex.

GENDER IDENTITY

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



9%

YES

89%

NO

1%

SOMETIMES

1%

NOT SURE WHAT
THIS MEANS

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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



Someone of the same sex: 6%

Someone of the opposite sex: 94%

MEET GEN ALPHA



@!JumpingJax
Faith, Family and
Friends. 📖 Gospel
and hip hop. 🎵

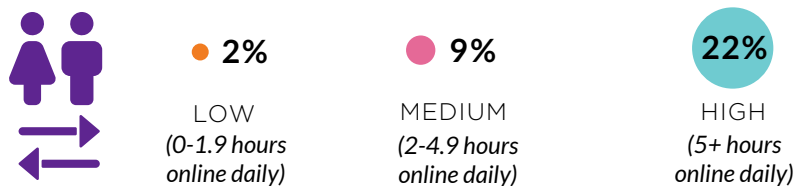
Meet 13-year-old **Jackson**.

The uncertainty around gender is something even committed Christian teens wrestle with. Take Jackson. He's 13 and goes to church with his parents every week, reads his Bible every day, and trusts in Jesus for salvation. But he doesn't feel like a boy, and he doesn't know what to do with that. He understands and believes what the Bible says about gender, but it doesn't make the feelings go away. He also recently looked at porn and he can't bring himself to talk to his parents about it—it's awkward, and he's not sure how they'd react. So instead, he prays that God will take it all away.

Preteens who spend more time online are much more likely to identify as a gender different from the one assigned at birth. While this reveals some connection between increased online activity and gender identity experiences, the reason for this trend is unclear. We are not suggesting that the internet is driving young people's thoughts or choices, but it is an interesting area for further study as this generation matures.

GENDER IDENTITY BY TIME ONLINE

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



Gen Alpha is not too young to be exposed to the issues of sex and pornography. Other research on young Canadians reveals that most young people are exposed to porn for the first time around the age of 12—some even earlier.²⁸

We asked preteens if they or peers their age have been sexually active or have recently viewed porn.²⁹ Among young people, 1 in 11 say they or peers they know have been sexually active in the past three months; 1 in 9 say they or their peers have recently looked at porn. Pornography usage trends upward with age, but boys and girls are equally likely to say they or their friends are using it.

SEX AND PORNOGRAPHY

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

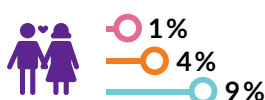


By Age:

I or peers my age have looked at porn in the past three months.



I or peers my age have been sexually active in the past three months.



²⁸ Daniel Dorman, "Why the Online Harms Act Should Not Address Child Exploitation," Macdonald-Laurier Institute, March 11, 2024, accessed March 31, 2025, <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/why-the-online-harms-act-should-not-address-child-exploitation-daniel-dorman-in-canadian-affairs/>

²⁹ See the Methodology and Data Collection section at the back of this report for more information on question wording.

Preteens who spend more time online are also more likely to say they or their friends are viewing pornography or are sexually active. Rates do not change between Christians and non-Christians. This suggests that faith is not really a significant factor in either behaviour—although we cannot know for certain if Christian preteens are reporting for themselves or others.

We also did not define what it meant to be sexually active but left that up to the respondent. Finally, household structure appears to play a role in exposure to pornography, with young people from non-traditional households more likely to have viewed it themselves or to know a friend who has.

By Time Online:

*I or peers my age have
looked at porn in the
past three months.*



6%

9%

19%

*I or peers my age have
been **sexually active** in
the past three months.*



0%

4%

10%

LOW
(0-1.9 hours
online daily)

MEDIUM
(2-4.9 hours
online daily)

HIGH
(5+ hours
online daily)

By Household:

*I or peers my age have
looked at porn in the
past three months.*



8%

19%

TWO BIOLOGICAL
PARENTS

ALL OTHER
HOUSEHOLDS

RESPONDING TO GEN ALPHA



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

- DEFINING GENDER

Preteens hold **complex and sometimes conflicting views on gender identity**. Many believe that gender is determined by the sex assigned at birth, while others say it is okay or might be okay to change your body to become a different gender. Gen Alpha is still forming their views on these significant topics, and they are engaging with a wide variety of cultural messages.

How can we lovingly create space for questions and dialogue while looking to Scripture for God's perspective on this issue?

- THE NEED FOR HONEST CONVERSATIONS

The majority of preteens (2 in 3) believe sex outside of marriage is or might be okay, highlighting how early young people are beginning to form their views on relationships and sexuality. This is a great age to **establish rhythms of open, honest conversations** even on these seemingly mature topics. As you do so, preteens will learn to feel secure bringing their questions and experiences to family members and trusted adults, even as social pressures intensify in the teen years.

How can we establish trust early and offer consistent guidance, so young people feel safe returning to us with deeper questions over time?



- NAVIGATING SEXUALITY AND GENDER

Some Gen Alpha preteens report **personal experiences related to gender identity and sexual orientation**. A small number identify as a gender different from what they were assigned at birth, and a few are interested in dating someone of the same sex. Even though they are young, some are already thinking about these topics and what they mean for their daily lives.

How can we be alert to the challenges our preteens may be facing and position ourselves as safe, trustworthy people they can talk to?

- EARLY PORNOGRAPHY EXPOSURE

We cannot assume that age or religion shields a preteen from encountering, seeking out or knowing someone who has viewed porn. While only a few report this, other research shows that the **average age of first exposure is 12**.³⁰ Additionally, this data reveals that older preteens and those who spend more time online are at a higher risk.

How can we prepare young people for the content they will inevitably encounter, equipping them with wisdom and practical advice to navigate it?



³⁰ Dorman, "Why the Online Harms Act."

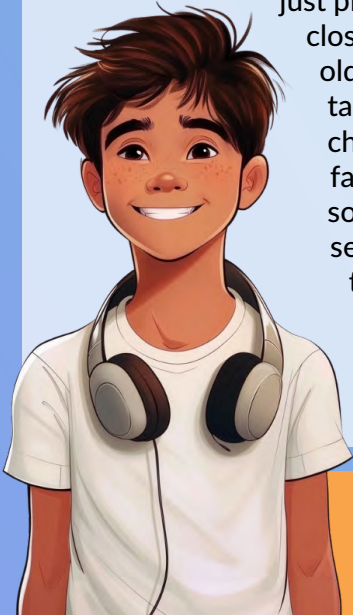
Mental Health



MEET GEN ALPHA

Meet 12-year-old **Logan**.

Middle school has been rough for Logan. He feels tons of pressure in class and hates gym—the bigger, more athletic guys pick on him for being small. The best part of his day? Jumping on Xbox. Gaming is his escape, and he spends hours playing with friends. He knows he stays up too late, and most nights he wishes he could just play all night. He's not super close to his family except his older brother, who's been talking to him more about church and Jesus. Logan's family is Christian, but something about his brother seems different—and for the first time, he's starting to feel curious.



@!Lucky\$Logan



Meet 11-year-old **Madison**.

Madison feels lonely a lot, even when she's around people. She has good friends and loves her mom, but it still feels like something is missing. She doesn't really talk to her mom about the stuff that actually matters—she's just too busy taking care of Madison and her younger brother. And when things feel hard, there's no other adult she'd go to. Madison spends most of her time outside school online. She loves TikTok and keeping up her Snapchat streaks with friends. Every now and then, she sees TikToks calling out Christian beliefs. She doesn't get why anyone would still believe in something so hateful.



@!madi_no_cap

Current streak: 247 days



WHAT WE DISCOVERED

Over a third of Gen Alphas struggle with **loneliness** or **high anxiety**, with nearly 1 in 5 reporting **depression**.

Non-religious preteens are **struggling more** with their mental health than their peers.

Preteens who spend more than **5 hours online** daily are **far more likely** to report loneliness, high anxiety or depression than those who spend less time online.

Preteens living in families with **two biological parents** are doing far better with their mental health.

Mental

HEALTH STRUGGLES

With mental health becoming a less stigmatized topic over the past few years, it is unsurprising to see Gen Alpha's self-awareness in this area. When asked about their experiences over the past three months, nearly 2 in 5 report having felt lonely, while about 1 in 3 have experienced high anxiety, and nearly 1 in 5 depression.

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

Within the past three months, I have experienced:



LONELINESS
39%



HIGH ANXIETY
32%



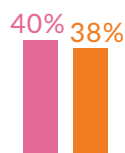
DEPRESSION
18%

Though our [previous Gen Z research](#) revealed that girls typically struggle with their mental health more than boys, this is not the case among Canadian preteens. In this study, both boys and girls report similar rates of loneliness, high anxiety or depression.

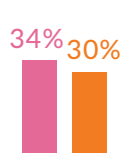
MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES BY GENDER

Within the past three months, I have experienced:

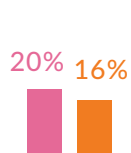
■ GIRLS ■ BOYS



Loneliness



High Anxiety



Depression

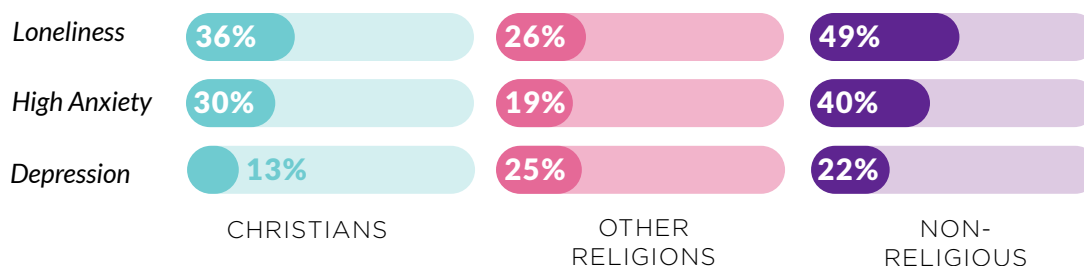


We were curious whether Gen Alpha's faith had any visible effects on their mental health. The data revealed that Christian preteens experience loneliness and high anxiety at lower rates than their non-religious peers, but slightly higher than those who follow other religions. Depression is the one data point where Christians are doing much better compared to their peers.

NON-RELIGIOUS
PRETEENS ARE
ESPECIALLY
VULNERABLE TO
MENTAL HEALTH
CHALLENGES.

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES BY RELIGION

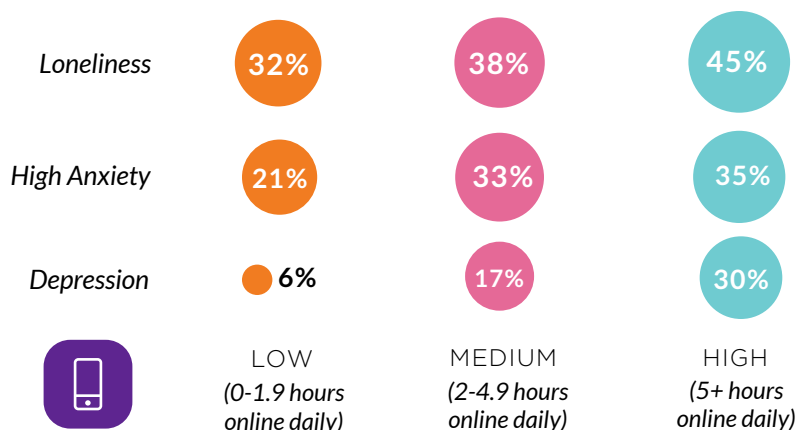
Within the past three months I have experienced:



In our [previous Gen Z research](#), we found that the amount of time a young person spends online is significantly connected to their overall mental health. This study shows that Gen Alpha is experiencing a similar trend, with higher rates of mental health struggles for those who spend more time online. Preteens who spend more than 5 hours online daily are much more likely to report loneliness, nearly twice as likely to report high anxiety and five times more likely to report depression than preteens who spend less than 2 hours online a day.

MENTAL HEALTH BY TIME ONLINE

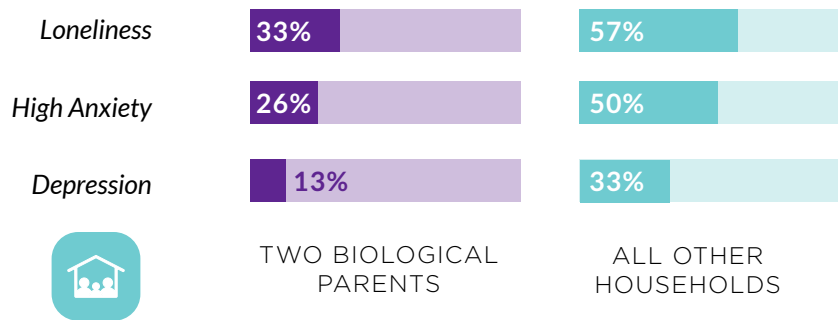
Within the past three months I have experienced:



We were also curious what effect a young person's home life is having on their mental health outlook. The results were decisive—those who live with both biological parents generally report half the mental health challenges of those in single-parent families, blended families or other family situations.

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES BY HOUSEHOLD

Within the past three months, I have experienced:



THE POWER OF FAITH IN FAMILIES



It's probably not surprising that young people in families with both biological parents report better mental health than their peers. The stability of having both biological parents present can be a significant factor in the state of their well-being. **Yet, non-traditional households are the reality for many Gen Alphas (24%).**

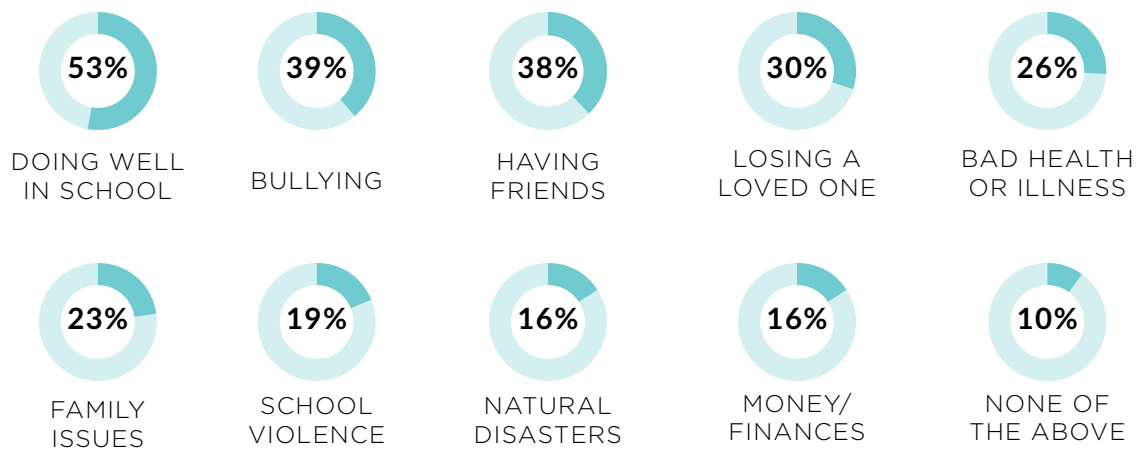
Divorce, absent parents and living between two or more locations can cause tremendous strain for a young person. It is wise to be aware of these households and how preteens might be affected as we seek to support and engage with this generation.

Worries

We wanted to know what might be causing young people to feel fearful. Perhaps predictably, preteens worry about things like doing well in school, being bullied and having friends. On average, each preteen selected four different worries from the list, showing that they aren't just dealing with a single concern—but a range of them. Notably, more than 1 in 4 preteens expressed concern about either bad health or illness or losing a loved one. This may reflect this generation's reality of growing up during a global pandemic.

WHAT THINGS DO YOU WORRY ABOUT?

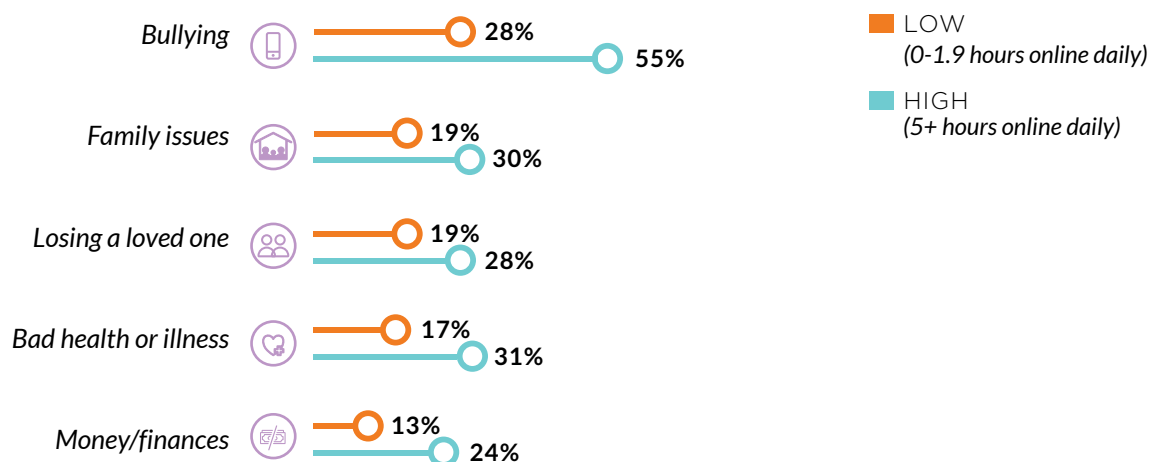
Select all that apply:



Time spent online also appears to be linked to how many things preteens worry about. Those who spend more than 5 hours a day online are more likely to report worries across many of our topics. This trend is particularly noticeable in concerns about bullying and financial worries.

WORRIES BY TIME ONLINE

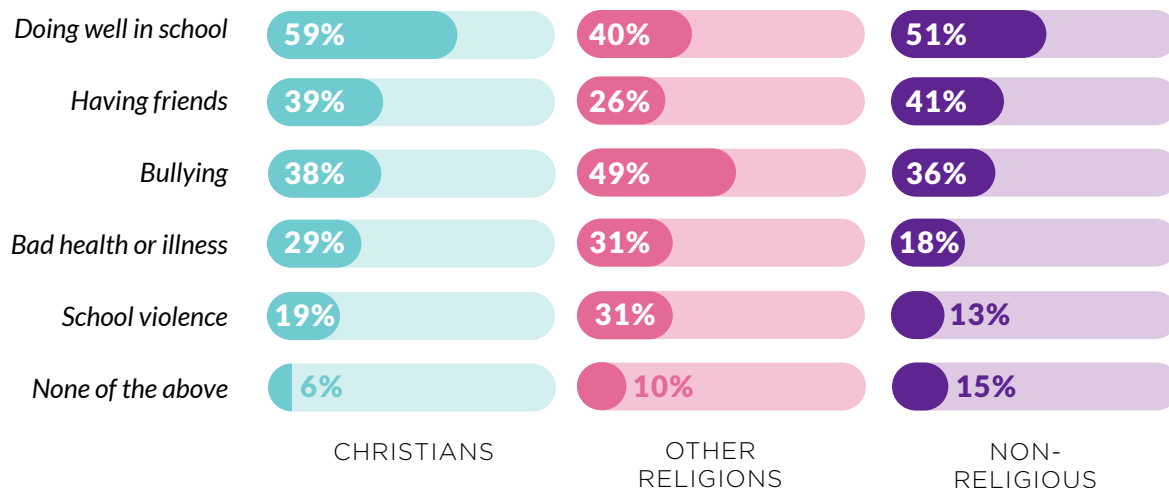
Select all that apply:



A young person's faith also appears to influence their fears. Preteens from other religions are the most concerned about bullying or school violence, but they are the least concerned about having friends or doing well in school. Interestingly, non-religious preteens were the most likely to select none of these topics—despite, as noted earlier, being the most likely to report high anxiety in the past three months. This could suggest that their anxiety is more general or connected to concerns not covered by the survey.

WORRIES BY RELIGION

Select all that apply



Suicide RISK

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

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

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS — 7%

SUICIDE ATTEMPTS — 1%

Only 1% of preteens report having attempted suicide or knowing of a peer who has attempted recently: 1 in 14 reports having had (or knowing of a peer who has had) suicidal thoughts within the last three months. While these numbers are encouragingly small, they still represent thousands of young Canadians in desperate need of hope and healing.

It is important to recognize that suicide risk is not always tied to a single event or experience. Instead, it often develops through a series of small steps and thoughts, gradually building over time. Rather than limiting our response to major life-altering traumas, we should focus on walking alongside preteens in daily life, guiding them toward perspectives that affirm their inherent, God-given value and provide hope for the future.

RESPONDING TO GEN ALPHA



Preteens express more worries and struggles than you might imagine for their age. Gen Alpha, despite being young, is already dealing with mature issues and dark experiences. They need support from people who will come alongside them to listen to their struggles and offer wise and loving guidance.

- MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

This research highlights the real and pressing mental health struggles Gen Alpha is facing. These young people are carrying **heavy mental and emotional burdens and witnessing their peers struggling too**. While faith does appear to make a difference in some areas, this report reminds us that no preteen is exempt from mental health challenges.

How can we help young people feel seen, supported and encouraged by the promises the gospel holds for their lives?

- NON-RELIGIOUS PRETEENS ARE STRUGGLING

While both boys and girls from every religious background struggle with their mental health, preteens who do not practise any religion are enduring **more hardship in nearly every category**. Their experience with loneliness and high anxiety are double that of their peers.

How can we build trust with these young people so that they may be open to a fulfilled life lived in relationship with Jesus?



- TIME ONLINE MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

One of the most distinct trends in this data was the connection between a preteen's **mental health and their time spent online**. Preteens who spend more than 5 hours online daily are far more likely to report loneliness, high anxiety or depression.

How can we build in-person experiences and communities that allow preteens to build real-world relationships?

How can we also teach wisdom regarding tech use so that these young people can learn to navigate the dangers associated with technology?

- PARTNERING WITH THE HOME

A preteen's living arrangements have an immense impact on their mental health. Preteens living in families with **two biological parents are doing far better** than those living in other family arrangements when it comes to feeling lonely, anxious or depressed. While we cannot control a preteen's household, we can be aware of the challenges that some families might be facing.

How can we identify and effectively partner with homes that might need more care and support?



ABOUT ONEHOPE

In partnership with local churches, ministries and governments around the world, OneHope has reached more than 2 billion children and youth with God's Word. Based on in-country research OneHope conducts, Scripture programmes are designed to be age and culturally relevant. Since 1987, OneHope has helped kids experience God's Story, sharing the life-changing message of hope with children and youth in every country. To learn more, visit onehope.net.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The study surveyed 422 teens ages 11-13 in Canada. This number is a representative sample, providing the statistical power to be 95% confident that percentage results were within 5% of the true population percentage for teens ages 11-13, and to perform corresponding statistical tests. Quotas were used to ensure an even number of 11-, 12- and 13-year-olds and an even number of boys and girls in order to have a meaningful sample size for age-based and gender-based analysis and comparisons. The instrument was distributed via Cint. As a quality control measure, respondents were disqualified if they incorrectly answered a simple attention-check question. The [research instrument](#) consisted of 49 questions.

Data for this study was collected from December 19, 2024, to December 31, 2024. Participants received the digital survey from their parents who first had to consent to their child being asked questions about risky and/or potential harmful activities. After consenting, parents were directed to hand the device to their child to complete the survey. Questions that dealt with especially harmful subjects were framed as: *"In the past three months, have you or peers your age (that you are aware of) experienced ..."* This was intended to help the survey feel safer to young people so they could answer honestly.

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