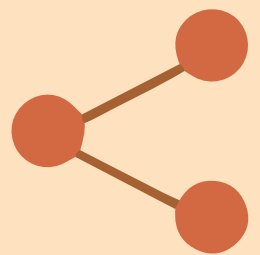
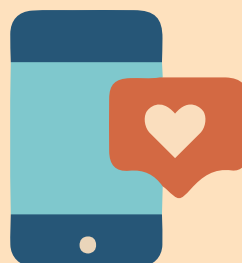


# GLOBAL YOUTH CULTURE

## *Australia Report*



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# INTRODUCTION

Each new generation is unique in its own way and research can help us understand how the world looks through different eyes. This research focuses on Generation Z, specifically teens ages 13-19. Across Australia, there are around 2 million Generation Z teens ages 13-19. These young people comprise about 9% of Australia's population.<sup>1</sup>

This research was designed to give a glimpse into the lives of Gen Z teens. Learn about their habits, struggles, beliefs and influences. Explore their views of God, Jesus, the Bible, and the church.

This data corresponds with a larger global study that surveyed teens across 20 countries.<sup>2</sup> We believe this study is the most comprehensive of its kind in terms of taking a deep look at the faith of this generation. The thousands of data points collected create a picture of this global generation including the values they share, the struggles they face, and what teens are looking to for answers and hope.



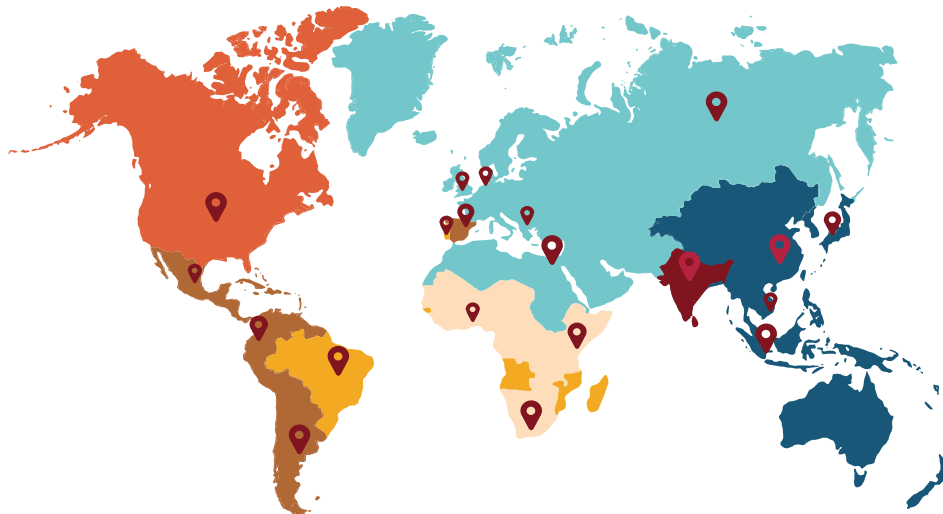
20 Countries



8,394 Teens  
Globally



Ages  
13-19



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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Data for the global study was collected February - March 2020 and in Australia June - July 2020. Global statistics are included in this report for reference, but should not be taken as direct comparisons given the difference in timing.

# ABOUT THE TEENS

This research was conducted online with teens ages 13-19 across Australia.<sup>1</sup> We hope you not only learn something new, but that your mind and heart are moved to action on behalf of this generation who so need the hope of the Gospel in their lives. Every statistic in this study represents many individual teens with their own sets of hopes, fears, and daily challenges. Each of those teens has a name, a story, and an eternal destiny.



420 TEENS SURVEYED

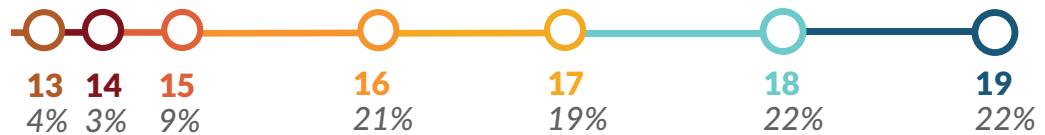


BOYS 50%  
GIRLS 50%



INTERNET CONNECTED<sup>1</sup>

## AGES



## RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

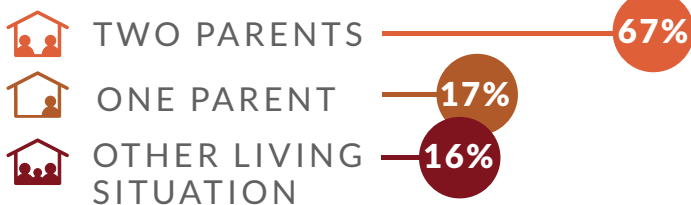


NO RELIGION 55%

CHRISTIAN 32%<sup>2</sup>

OTHER 14%

## HOUSEHOLD



1. As the survey was distributed digitally, being Internet-connected was a prerequisite for participants in this study. Therefore, this data should not be taken to represent all teens in Australia but only those who have regular access to the Internet.

2. Note that 53% of Christian teens surveyed identified as Catholic.

# RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

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AUSTRALIA REPORT

# What We Discovered

**53%** of Australian teens said their **faith beliefs** are an important part of their **identity** as compared to 67% of teens in the global study.



**2 in 3** non-Christian teens would consider **coming to church** if invited.



**7 in 10** non-Christian teens say most Christians they know are **kind and caring**.



**32%** of teens identified as Christian.



But just **3%** are committed to their faith.

*(see definition on page 10)*



**47%** of Christian teens **never read** the Bible.



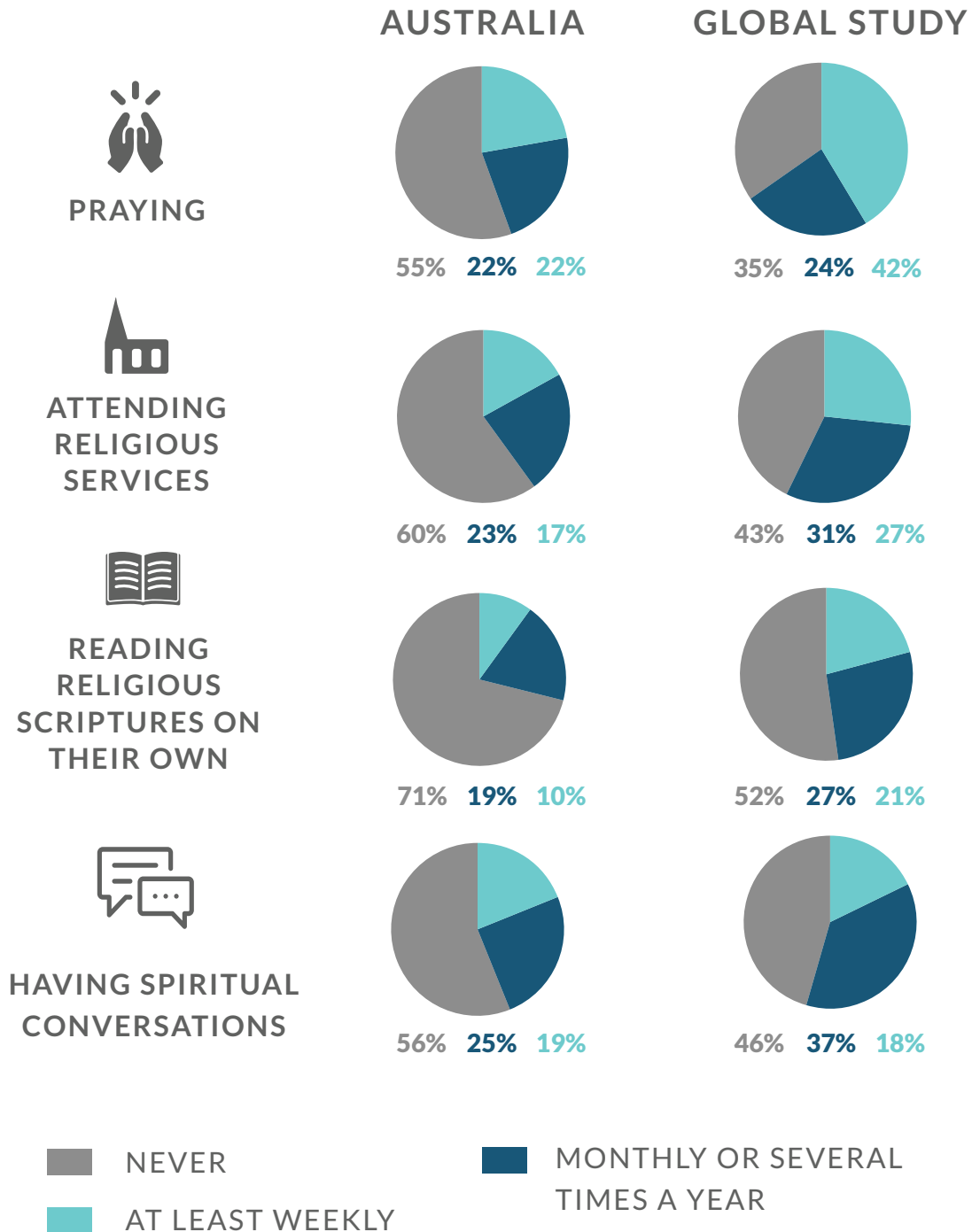
**37%** of Christian teens **attend church** at least weekly.



Fewer than half of Christian teens (**42%**) say their church has a **youth pastor**. An additional 28% are not sure.

# Religious Habits

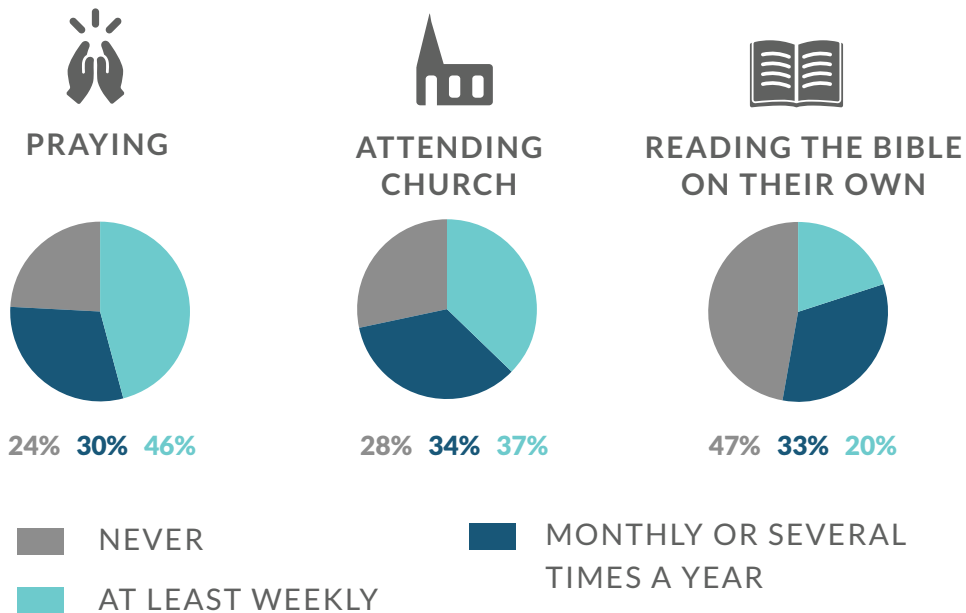
More than half of Australian teens (55%) said they are non-religious and relatively few have consistent spiritual practices. Australian teens were half as likely as others in their global generation to say they pray or read religious scriptures weekly.



# Understanding Christian Teens

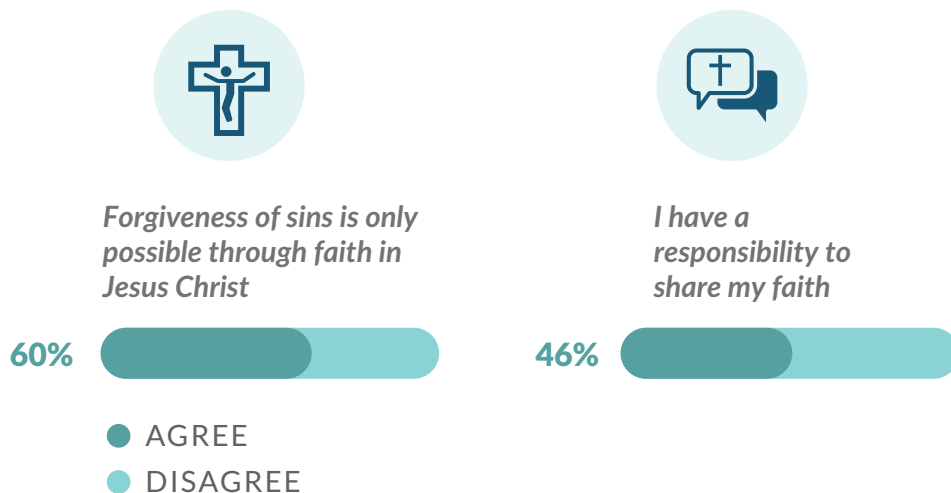
Living in such a secular generation appears to be impacting Christians as well. Most are not consistent in their spiritual disciplines or church attendance. In fact, nearly half of Christian teens say they never read the Bible.

## RELIGIOUS HABITS OF CHRISTIANS



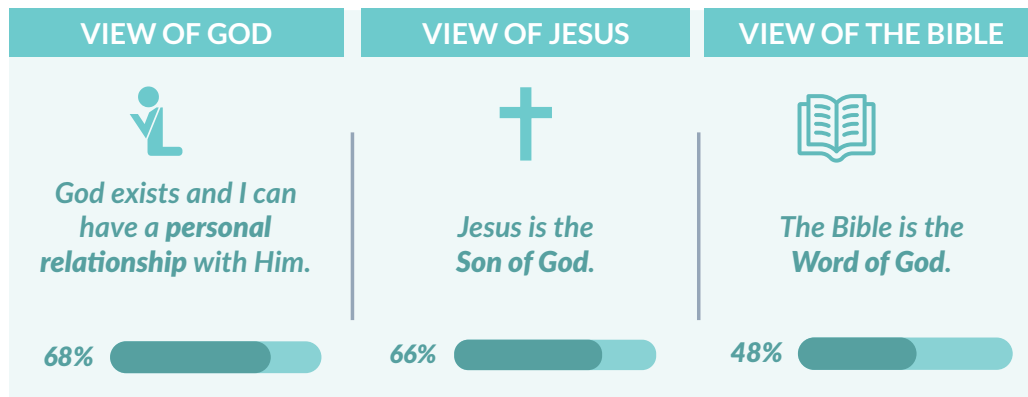
## SPIRITUAL VIEWPOINTS

The majority of Christian teens affirm the exclusivity of the Gospel, saying forgiveness of sins is only possible through Jesus Christ. But fewer than half feel a personal responsibility to evangelize.





Most Christian teens do have a scriptural viewpoint of God and Jesus, but there are some gaps in their understanding of Scripture. Only around half say the Bible is the Word of God.



## THEIR CHURCH EXPERIENCE

We were curious what Christian teens would have to say about their experience at church. Church communities can play a vital role in introducing young people to the Gospel and growing them in their faith.

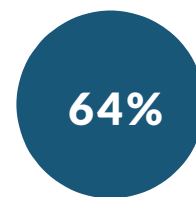
Unfortunately, more than 1 in 3 Christian teens (37%) said they did not attend a church’s children’s ministry. But of those who did attend, the majority said it played an important role in their spiritual growth.



*A church’s children’s ministry played an important role in my spiritual growth*



AUSTRALIA



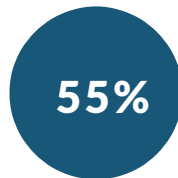
GLOBAL STUDY

47% OF CHRISTIAN TEENS SAY THEY NEVER READ THE BIBLE

When it comes to youth ministry, this research revealed a concerning gap among Australian churches. Just 42% of teens surveyed can confirm that their church has a pastor for youth or young adults and 28% are not sure. Even fewer teens (31%) said they talk to a spiritual leader at their church about life issues or concerns.



The church I attend has a pastor for youth or young adults.



2 IN 3 CHRISTIAN TEENS NEVER TALK TO A CHURCH LEADER ABOUT THEIR LIFE CONCERNS

## 6 TRAITS OF COMMITTED CHRISTIANS

But what does it truly mean to be a Christian? We looked at the core beliefs and key spiritual disciplines that would reveal a teen understands the Gospel's foundational truths and is actively living out their faith through Bible reading and prayer. Teens who met this criteria were considered to be Committed Christians. The remaining Christian teens are called Nominal Christians throughout this report.

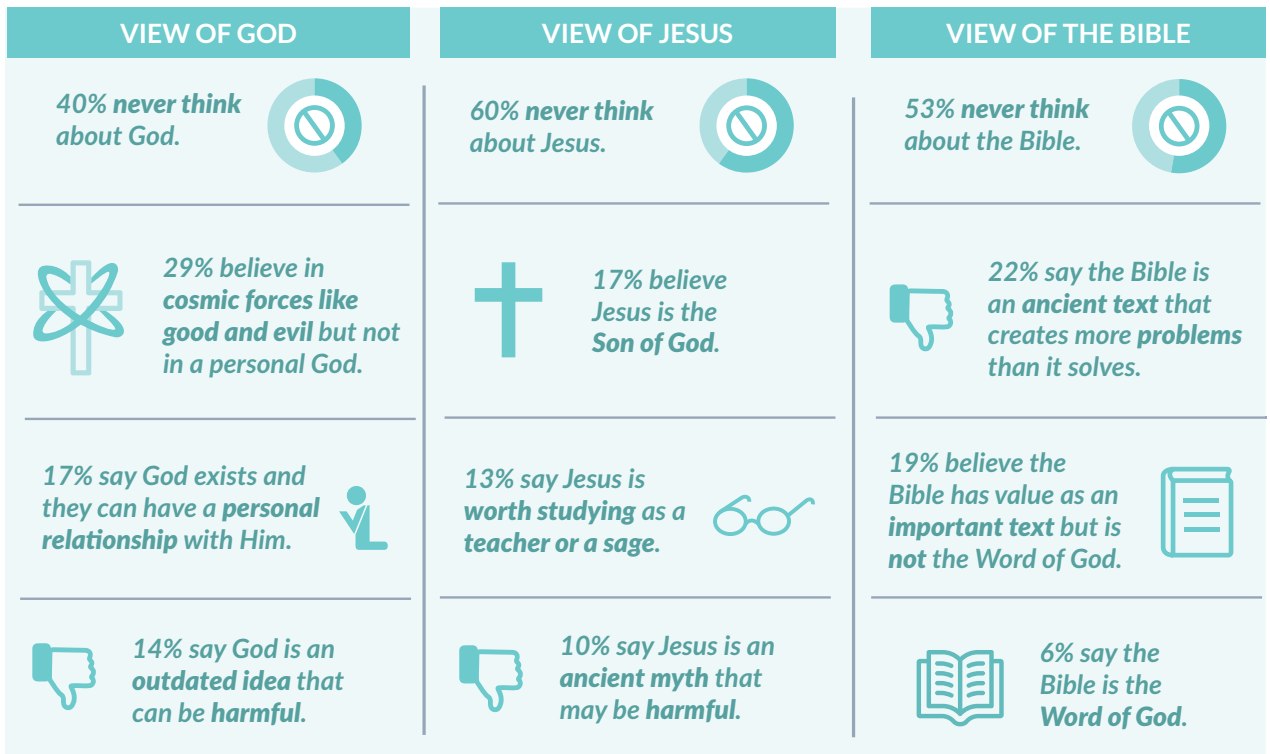
Just 3% of teens in Australia were discovered to be Committed Christians, as compared with 7% of teens surveyed globally.



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

# Understanding Non-Christian

Non-Christian teens in Australia are overwhelmingly non-religious. Unsurprisingly, Non-Christians mostly say they don't think about spiritual things including God, Jesus, or the Bible. There was more hostility observed in their attitude towards the Bible than towards either God or Jesus.



## ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHRISTIANS

Interestingly, 1 in 5 non-Christian teens surveyed said they don't know any Christians. But of those who do, 7 in 10 responded that the Christians they know are kind and caring. It was encouraging to see that believers have a positive reputation on a relational level.

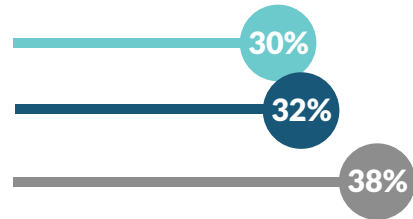
Most Christians I know are kind and caring.

71%

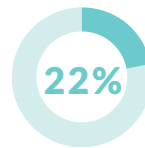
When it comes to church, non-Christian teens were divided on whether they would come if invited. Overall 2 in 3 said they would consider it and just 1 in 3 said no. Girls were much more likely than boys to say they would accept an invitation.

## OPEN TO ATTENDING CHURCH

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



■ YES ■ NO ■ NOT SURE



BOYS



GIRLS

2 IN 3 NON-CHRISTIANS WOULD CONSIDER COMING TO CHURCH IF INVITED



# Conclusions

This data shows where teens are in their faith journey and helps us understand their religious identity, habits, and viewpoints. It also points us towards practical action as we seek to guide Christian teens to maturity in faith and share the Gospel with non-believers.

- **AWAKEN THIS GENERATION**

Today's young people are not hostile towards Christianity, they just aren't thinking about God or matters of faith. Many teens in Australia, as well as around the globe, are living their lives asleep to spiritual realities. How can we start conversations with this non-religious generation that awakens them to the spiritual things they are missing out on?

- **STRENGTHEN BIBLICAL LITERACY AND ENGAGEMENT.**

God's Word is life-giving! But unfortunately around half of Christian teens say they never read the Bible. This spiritual discipline grows our relationship with God in a way nothing else can. How can we help this next generation encounter the life-giving truth God's Word has for them and develop a hunger for Scripture in their lives?

- **INVITE TEENS TO CHURCH.**

Most Australian teens are not at church on a Sunday. But the good news is that non-believers have a positive perception of the Christians in their lives. Most teens say they would consider coming to church if invited. So it doesn't hurt to ask!

- **RESOURCE NEXT GENERATION MINISTRY.**

Teens who attended a church's children's ministry said it was pivotal in helping them grow spiritually. But fewer than half of Christian teens say their church has a youth pastor to continue that discipleship journey. How will we ensure this generation is being well cared for spiritually within our churches so their faith can become strong and mature?

# PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND STRUGGLES

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AUSTRALIA REPORT

# What We Discovered

More than half of Australian teens are struggling with their mental health, including **loneliness, high anxiety, or depression.**



**34%** of teens reported **suicidal ideation** within the past 90 days.



Christian teens who **read the Bible** at least weekly are doing much **better with their mental health** than those who read Scripture less frequently.

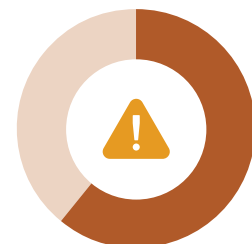
**41%** of girls reported experiencing **suicidal thoughts** in the past three months.

They are also struggling in other **mental health** areas more than boys.



**Older teens** are struggling more than younger teens with their **mental health** and are also more likely to report concerning behaviors such as sexual activity and viewing pornography.

**3 in 5** boys say they have viewed pornography recently.



# A Concerning Look at Mental Health

Teens in Australia shared that they are dealing with some serious personal struggles. Nearly three in four reported loneliness and more than half say they have experienced high anxiety or depression within the past three months.<sup>1</sup>

Social isolation due to COVID-19 may have contributed to these staggering numbers. Other research, however, shows that mental health diagnoses were on the rise among Australian young people even before the global pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Note that our reported percentages are not necessarily clinical levels of depression or anxiety. Teens interpreted for themselves the terms provided and self-reported if they felt they had experienced them.

## MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

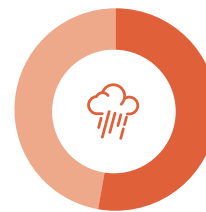
Within the past three months I have



LONELINESS **74%**



HIGH ANXIETY **60%**



DEPRESSION **53%**

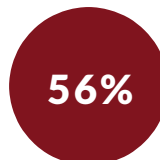
A teen's age was seen to play a role in some aspects of their mental health. For example, teens ages 13-15 are some of the least likely to be struggling with depression as compared to their older peers.



DEPRESSION



13-15



16-17



18-19

<sup>1</sup> Note that data was collected in June - July 2020, with teens asked to reflect on the past three months of their lives.

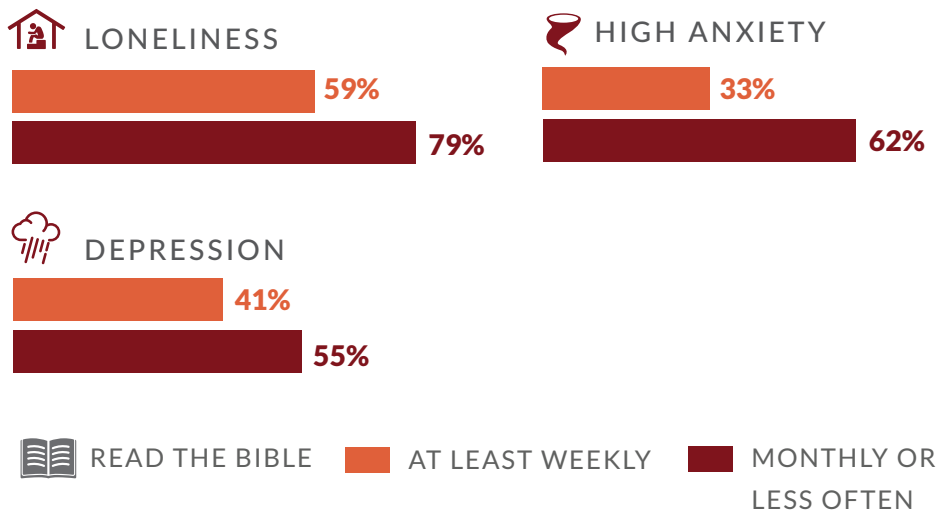
<sup>2</sup> One report shared that mental health diagnoses have increased by more than 20% in the past five years alone, and currently 1 in 4 teens ages 15-19 meet the criteria for a serious mental illness. McCrindle, Understanding The Impact Of Covid-19 On The Emerging Generations <https://mccrindle.com.au/wp-content/uploads/COVID19-Emerging-Generations-Report.pdf>



Religion alone does not improve a teen’s mental health outlook. Christian teens are as likely as non-Christians to be dealing with loneliness, high anxiety, or depression. Even habits like weekly church attendance are not enough on their own to significantly decrease these struggles.

However, of all the spiritual disciplines, one was seen to make a huge difference—Scripture engagement. Christian teens who say they read the Bible on their own at least weekly are significantly less likely to be experiencing mental health struggles.

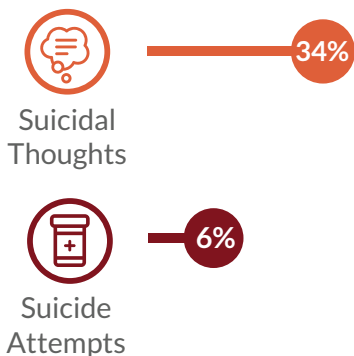
## THE POWER OF SCRIPTURE



## Some Teens are in Dark Places

We asked teens to self-report if they had, within the last three months, experienced suicidal thoughts or made a suicide attempt. In Australia, more than 1 in 3 teens reported suicidal ideation. Thankfully, relatively few reported making a suicide attempt.

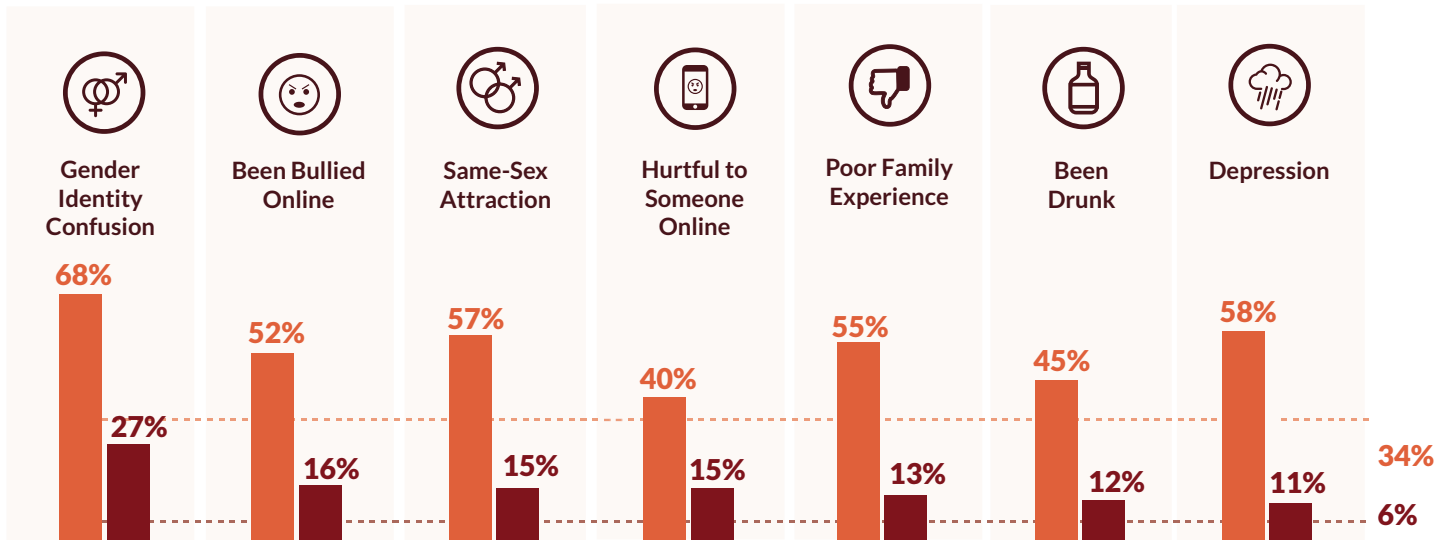
## SUICIDE RISK



1 IN 3 TEENS  
IN AUSTRALIA  
REPORT  
SUICIDAL  
IDEATION.

# SUICIDE RISK FACTORS

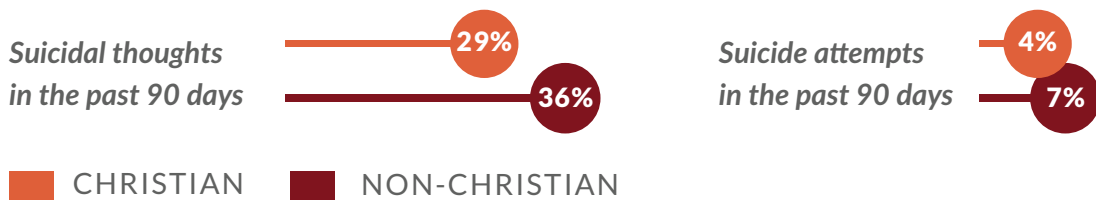
■ SUICIDAL THOUGHTS   
 ■ SUICIDE ATTEMPTS   
 ⋯ AUSTRALIA AVERAGE



Our research revealed many factors that connect with a teen’s risk for suicide. Teens who reported gender identity confusion were at the highest risk for both suicidal ideation and attempts. Same-sex attraction and depression also corresponded to high rates of suicidal thoughts. Online bullying, a poor family experience, and alcohol usage also more than doubled a teen’s risk for making a suicide attempt.

# THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH

Encouragingly, Christian faith can make a positive difference for young people in this area. Christian teens in Australia are slightly less likely than non-Christians to have recently had suicidal thoughts or to report an attempt.



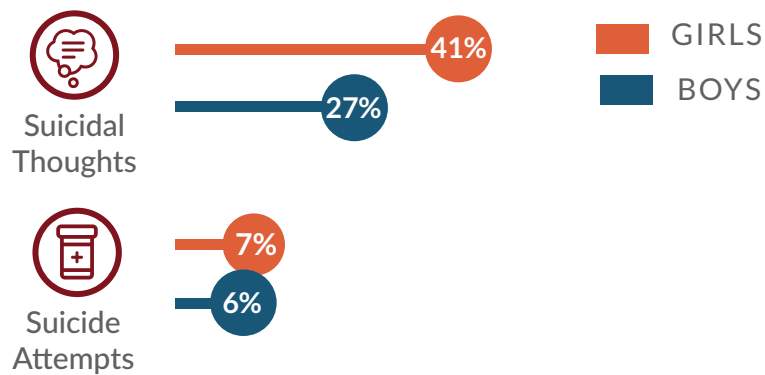
It is not necessarily one event that triggers teens to try to take their life, but could be a series of small steps and thoughts that each build on the other. Regardless of the specific circumstances, this data shows that some young people are in very dark places that are driving them towards desperate action. We should be heartbroken for young people who feel life is so meaningless that they want to end it. When it comes to suicide, we are not looking at numbers on a page or percentages of a sample—but at real people’s lives. Which means any number is too many.

# Girls Struggle

The data clearly showed that girls are struggling more than boys with their mental health and are at higher risk for suicide. It is possible that girls may feel more freedom to vocalize the struggles they are experiencing. The contrasts, however, are stark in every area and should be carefully considered.

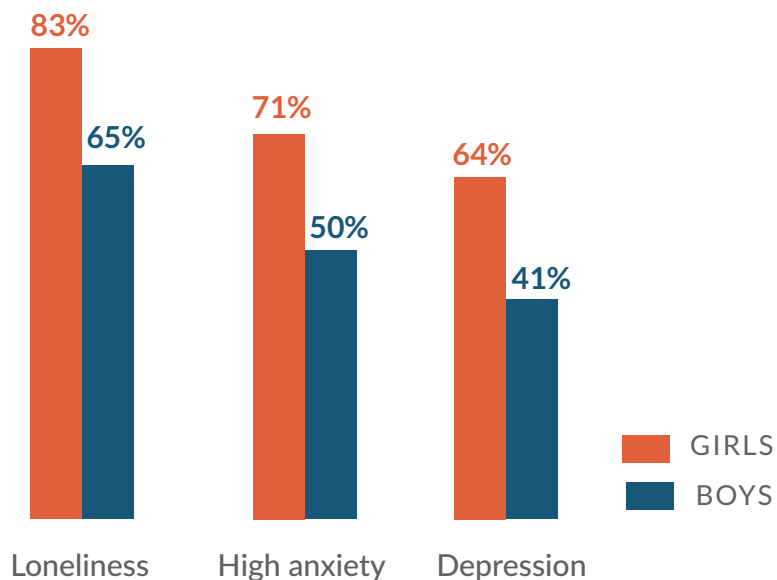
## SUICIDE RISK BY GENDER

Within the past three months I have



## MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES BY GENDER

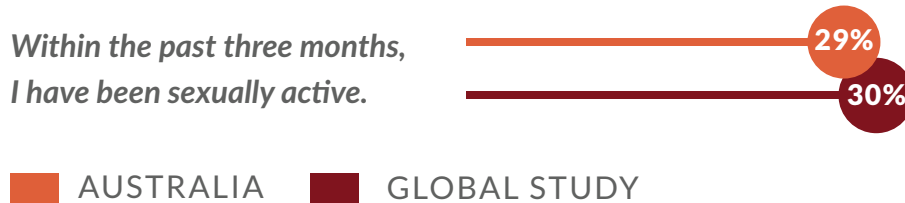
Within the past three months I have



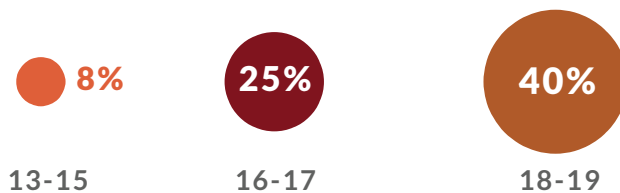
# Teens and

In Australia, 3 in 10 teens report being sexually active within the last three months, which corresponds with the average reported in the global study.<sup>1</sup>

In answering this question respondents defined for themselves what it means to be sexually active. Any who also reported being married were excluded to ensure this statistic represented only sex outside the context of marriage.



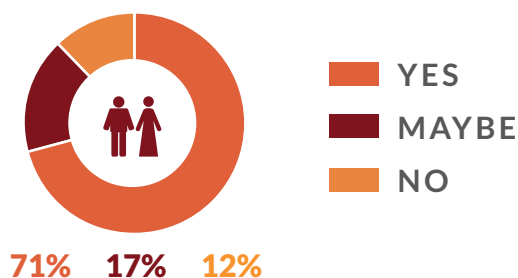
## SEXUAL ACTIVITY BY AGE



Older teens were over four times more likely than younger teens to report sexual activity. The vast majority of Australian teens believe sex before marriage is acceptable.

## VIEW OF PRE-MARITAL SEX

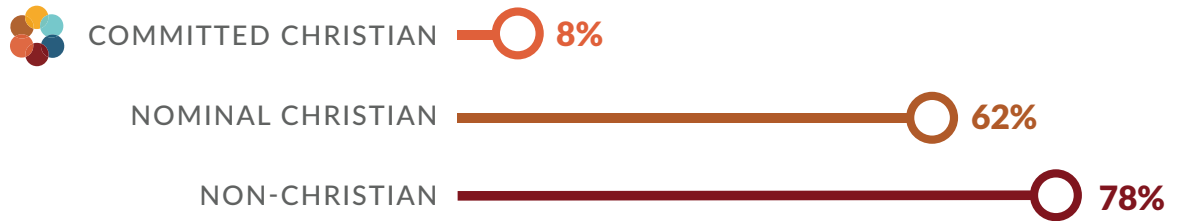
Do you believe it is okay to have sex before marriage?



<sup>1</sup> Note that research results were collected for the global study February - March 2020 and in Australia June - July 2020. This difference in timing may be reflected in the research, especially given the state of national lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH

Yes, it is okay to have sex before marriage:



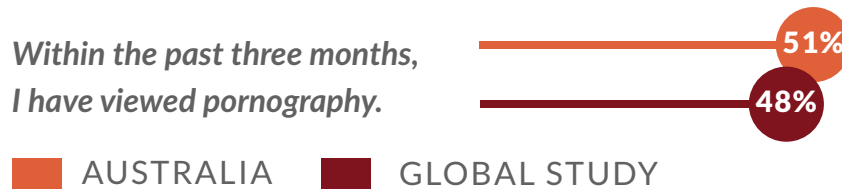
Encouragingly, being a Committed Christian makes a big difference in a teen's viewpoint. However, it should be noted that only a small number of Committed Christians participated in the study.

## Pornography is a Problem

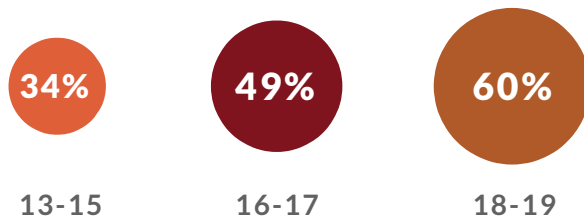
Half of teens surveyed reported having viewed pornography within the past three months, which is similar to the global average. Older teens are more likely than younger teens to have viewed it.

### PORNOGRAPHY USAGE

*Within the past three months,  
I have viewed pornography.*




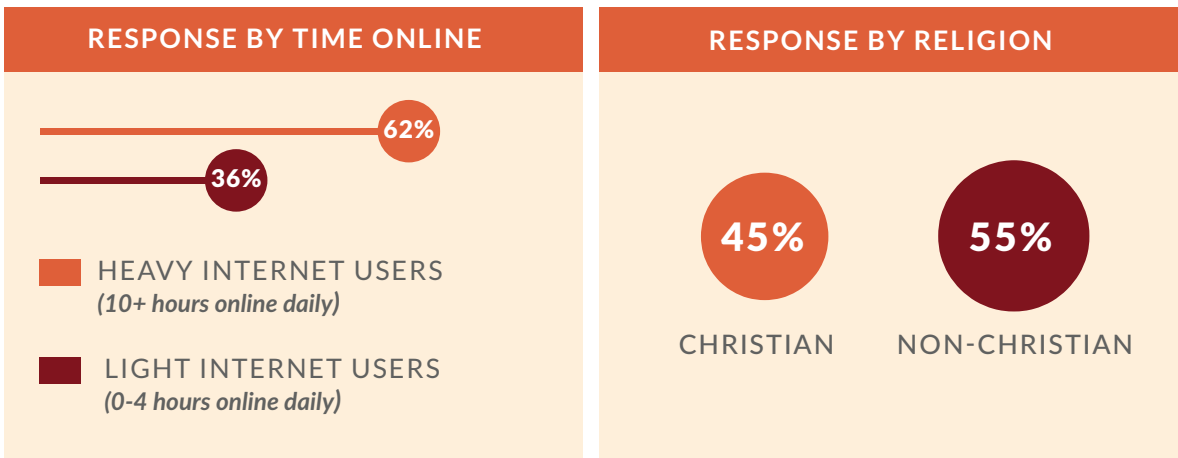
### PORNOGRAPHY USAGE BY AGE



Boys are far more likely than girls to have recently looked at pornographic material. Perhaps predictably, teens who spend more time online daily report using pornography much more than those who spend less time online. Unfortunately, Christians are struggling in this area almost as much as their non-Christian peers.



 I have looked at pornography within the past 90 days



# Conclusions

The struggles young people are reporting should deeply concern us. Every person's situation is different, and there is no one answer to the challenges they may be facing. But it is critical for us to be aware of the nature and seriousness of the realities this generation is experiencing.

- **THIS GENERATION IS STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.**

Most teens in Australia are feeling lonely, anxious, or depressed. These feelings can lead them to dark places. How can we come alongside young people and encourage them in the midst of the challenges they are experiencing?

- **SUICIDE RISK IS A SERIOUS ISSUE.**

Some teens are seriously tempted by the idea of ending their own lives. A large variety of factors play into this from personal identity issues to poor family experiences to toxic social interactions like online bullying. Without a deep sense of meaning and purpose, teens are in real danger. How can we help young people see the light and embrace the hope of the Gospel for their lives?

- **GIRLS NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT.**

The differences in personal struggle rates by gender are undeniable and cannot be ignored. Girls are struggling much more with aspects of their mental health and are at a much higher suicide risk than boys. This should be a wake-up call for parents, pastors, and anyone who cares about this generation. Consider the unique struggles girls may be facing and how we can walk alongside them in wisdom and love.

- **SEX IS NOT SACRED.**

Australian teens are very accepting of sex before marriage and some are acting on this permissive viewpoint. What we believe in life guides our behavior and choices. How can we help young people embrace a more biblical viewpoint that values and stewards the gift of sexuality?

- **PORNOGRAPHY IS HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT.**

This is a significant issue for today's teens in Australia and around the world. It is especially tempting for boys and for those who spend more time online just clicks away from this content. How can we address the pervasive issue of pornography usage that has ensnared this next generation?

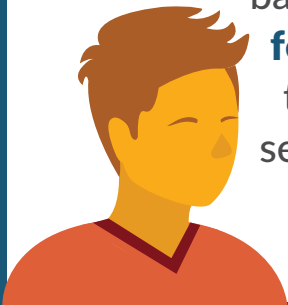
# GENDER IDENTITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

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AUSTRALIA REPORT



# What We Discovered



More teens believe **gender** is primarily based on a **person's feelings** or desires than on a person's sex at birth.



**2 in 3** Australian teens believe people should be able to **change their body** to become a different gender.

Around **1 in 4** teens report having felt sexually attracted to someone of the **same gender** within the past three months.



**Girls** are twice as likely as boys to report **same-sex attraction**.

**Gender and sexuality** are complex topics, with teens saying they most often go online or to **social media for advice**.



**Girls** have a **less traditional** view of gender identity than boys do and are more likely to say it is acceptable to **change your body** to become a different gender.



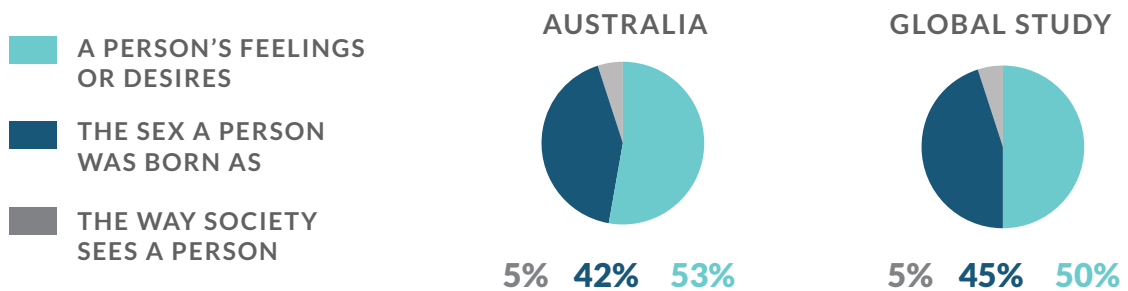
**7 in 10** teens believe **marriage** should not be exclusively between a man and a woman.

# Gender Identity as a Choice

This generation is currently divided on the topic of gender identity, but the scales appear to be tipping in favor of a non-traditional view. Over half of teens in Australia say gender is primarily based on a person's feelings or desires. A similar number of their global generation agree, though viewpoints varied widely depending on geographic location.

## VIEW OF GENDER

What is gender primarily based on?



## VIEW OF GENDER CHANGE

Australian teens believe that people should have the freedom to choose their gender if they wish. Two in three say a person should be able to change their body to become a different gender, which is far more than the global average of their generation.

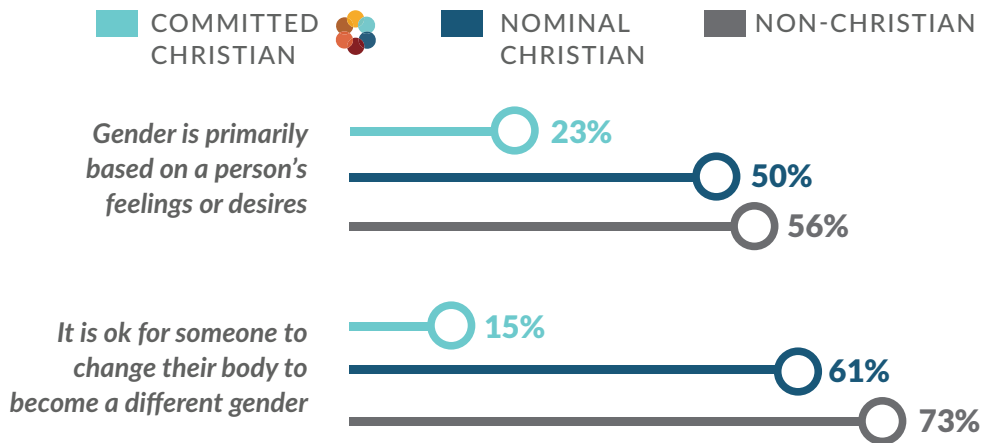


Boys and girls were observed to have different viewpoints on this topic, with girls being less traditional. More girls than boys believe that gender is a subjective reality. Girls are also much more likely to say it is acceptable for someone to change their body to become a different gender.



Faith can make a difference in a teen's viewpoint. Committed Christians have very different beliefs in this area as compared to their peers.<sup>1</sup> They are half as likely to say gender is primarily based on a person's feelings or desires and relatively few support the idea of gender change.

## THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH

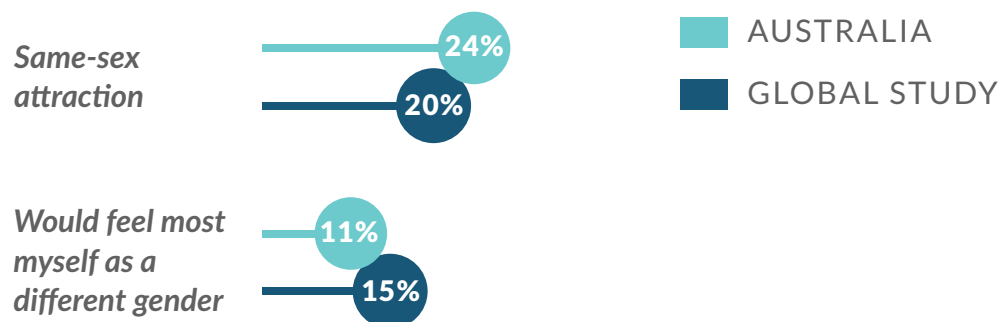


## Personal Experiences

In addition to sharing their viewpoints on gender identity, teens also gave some insight into their personal experiences in this area. Around 1 in 4 Australian teens say they recently experienced same-sex attraction and 1 in 9 say they would feel most themselves as a different gender.

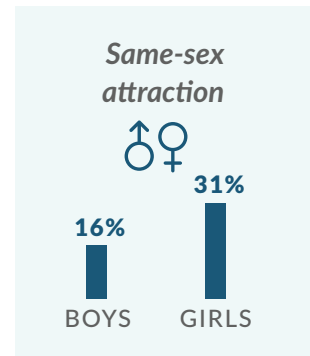
## GENDER STRUGGLES

Within the past three months:

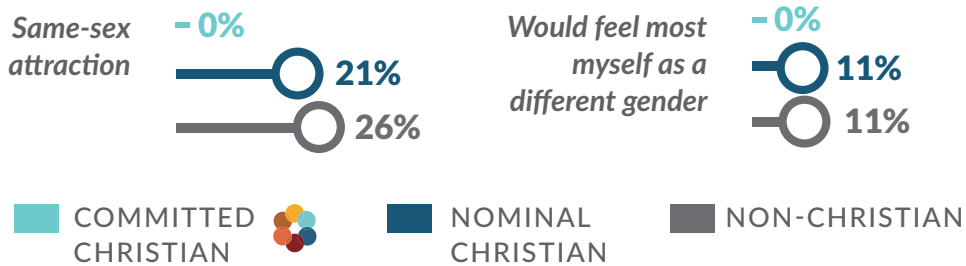


<sup>1</sup> Note that the number of Committed Christians in our sample was small, so related percentages should be carefully considered.

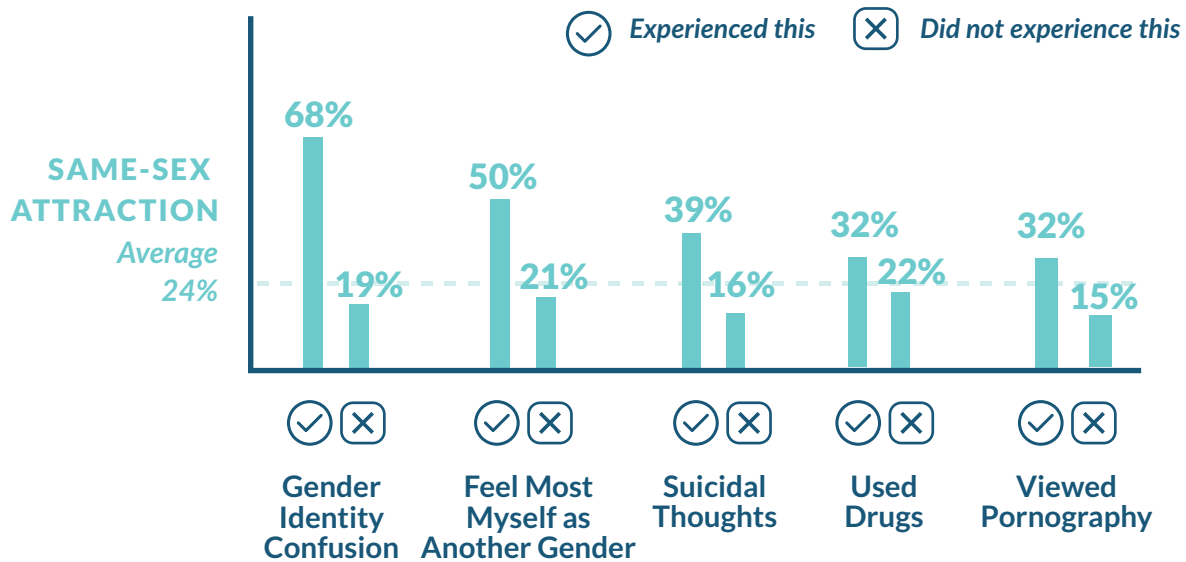
Both gender and religion were seen to make a difference in teens' responses. Teen girls were twice as likely as teen boys to report same-sex attraction. No Committed Christians said they were dealing with this or other gender identity issues.<sup>1</sup> But Nominal Christians were nearly equally as likely as non-Christians to report they face these struggles in their lives.



## THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH



## 5 CONNECTIONS WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTION



Same-sex attraction appears to cluster with other behaviors. Unsurprisingly, there is a close link between same-sex attraction and gender identity issues. Of those who reported gender identity confusion, 2 in 3 also reported same-sex attraction. But there are also connections with other behaviors such as suicidal thoughts, using drugs, and viewing pornography. This data shows that same-sex attraction is not an isolated experience, but that some teens are struggling deeply in multiple areas of their lives.

<sup>1</sup> Note that the number of Committed Christians in our sample was small, so related percentages should be carefully considered.

# Influences on the Conversation

The topics of gender and sexuality can be complex and teens have a variety of voices they can listen to.

Overall, there is no single source that Australian teens say they turn to consistently for information or guidance in this area. The internet and social media are influential, as well as friends and peers, with family members ranking third.

Teens who are personally dealing with same-sex attraction in their lives turn to the Internet for advice more than family members. Nearly half (47%) of same-sex attracted teens say they primarily go to online or social media for advice and just 8% say they go to family.



## GENDER & SEXUALITY CONVERSATIONS

*Where I go most often for information or guidance about gender, sexuality, and sexual issues*

- 1 **ONLINE/SOCIAL MEDIA 35%**  
*Global Study: 36%*
- 2 **FRIENDS/PEERS 31%**
- 3 **FAMILY 22%**
- 4 **TEACHERS/COUNSELORS 7%**
- 5 **OFFLINE MEDIA 3%**
- 6 **RELIGIOUS LEADERS/TEXTS 3%**

## THE INFLUENCE OF SCRIPTURE

Encouragingly, the picture looks different for Committed Christians.<sup>1</sup> They are many times more likely than Nominal Christians to say they turn to pastors or the Bible for guidance in this area.

*Turn to pastors or Bibles for information or guidance about gender and sexuality*



COMMITTED CHRISTIAN

NOMINAL CHRISTIAN

<sup>1</sup> Note that the number of Committed Christians in our sample was small, so related percentages should be carefully considered.

# Attitudes towards Marriage

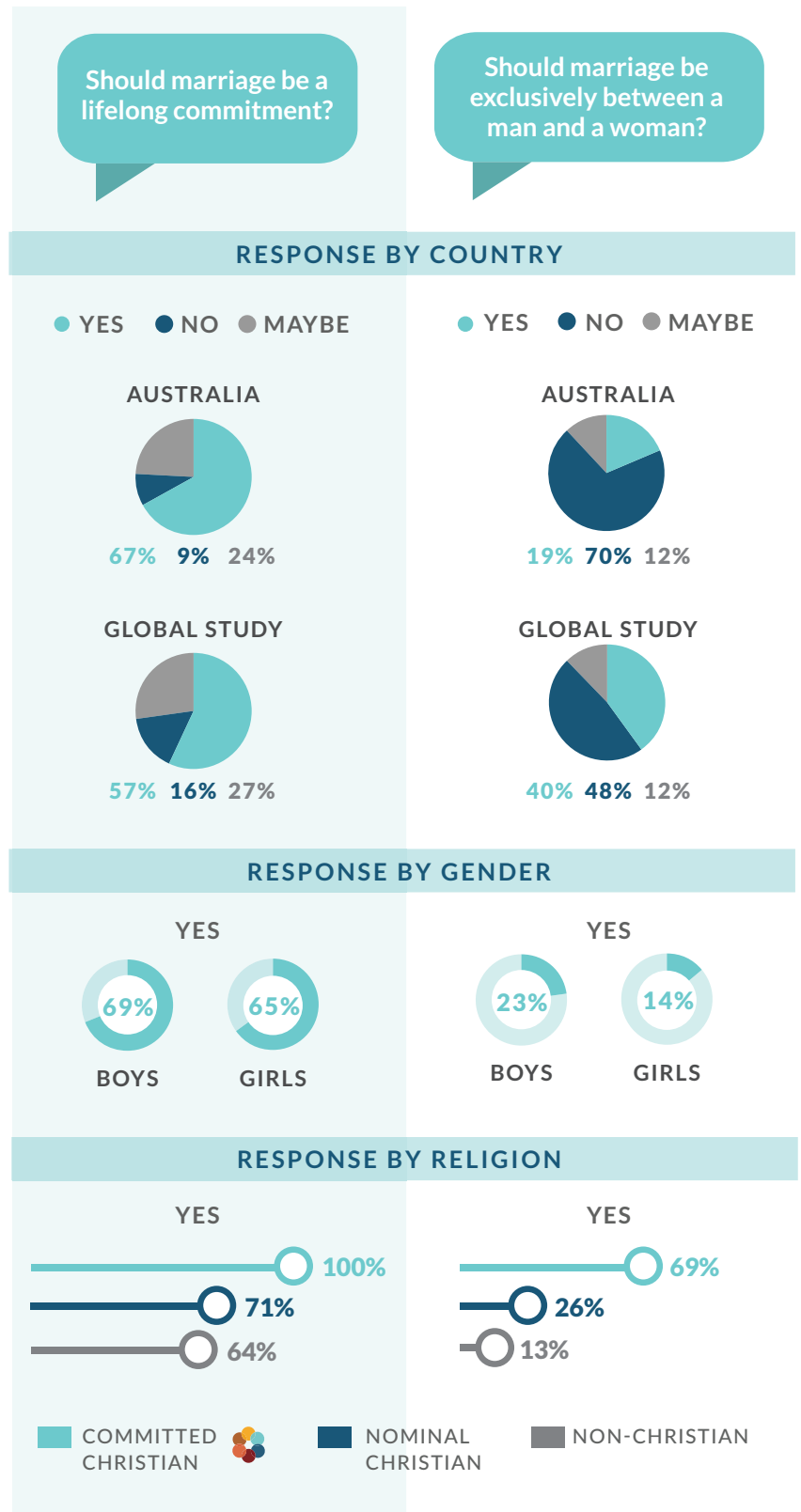
This generation has its own views about marriage. A strong majority of Australian teens agree that marriage should be a lifelong commitment, including all Committed Christians surveyed.<sup>1</sup>

But 7 in 10 teens say it should not be exclusively between a man and a woman. Girls are even less likely than boys to say marriage should be exclusively heterosexual.

Overall, just 6% of teens in Australia have a biblical view of marriage, believing it should be both a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman and that sex should be saved for the context of marriage.

6% OF TEENS HAVE A BIBLICAL VIEW OF MARRIAGE

<sup>1</sup> Note that the number of Committed Christians in our sample was small, so related percentages should be carefully considered.



# Conclusions

This research is an important glimpse into this generation's views on the subjects of gender identity and marriage. These topics are both deeply personal and widely communal. How people see themselves and relate to others influences their actions and culture profoundly.

- **CREATE SPACE FOR CONVERSATION.**

The topics of gender identity, same-sex attraction, and gay marriage have become central conversations for this generation. Many young people today are deeply convinced that gender is a personal decision and changing that identity is their choice to make. What conversations do we need to have on the subject of God-given identity and how can we create safe spaces to dialogue with young people both inside and outside our churches?

- **CENTER TEENS IN GOD'S TRUTH.**

Many Christian young people are getting caught up in mainstream opinion on the topics of gender and sexuality. Although God's Word provides a different perspective from culture, many teens are not reading the Bible for themselves. And we cannot assume that just because a teen is a believer or even at church regularly means they are protected from these feelings and questions. How can we encourage teens to engage with the truth of Scripture and allow it to guide their thoughts and choices?

- **SPEAK TO BOTH GIRLS AND BOYS.**

Girls and boys are not the same in their viewpoints or experiences. Girls are much more likely than boys to report same-sex attraction and have a more flexible view of gender and marriage. How can we engage both boys and girls in holistic conversation about these topics and the implications of these important life choices?

- **HELP TEENS UNDERSTAND GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE.**

Australian teens are very opposed to defining marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman. Today's culture preaches acceptance and love for all walks of life. But how can we help teens understand God's beautiful design for marriage and the benefits of commitment when it comes to covenant?

# DIGITAL CONNECTEDNESS AND IMPACT

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AUSTRALIA REPORT

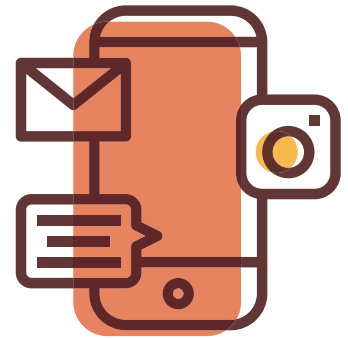


# What We Discovered

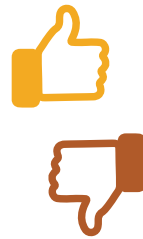
Teens in Australia spend around **7.5 hours** online daily.



Nearly all teens check their **social media** daily, but 3 in 5 say they spend an **hour or less** on these platforms.

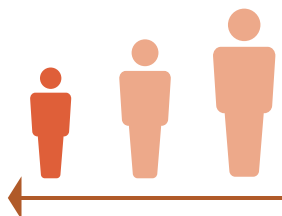


**59%** of Australian teens say social media contributes to their **life satisfaction**, but over half also report it makes them feel **sad, anxious, or depressed**.



**97%** of teens say they watch video content every day on platforms including Netflix and YouTube.

Teens ages **13-15** spend the **least amount** of time online daily and are the least likely to report social media generates negative emotions.



Teens who spend **more time online** daily are less likely to go to family for **guidance** and more likely to consult the Internet or social media.

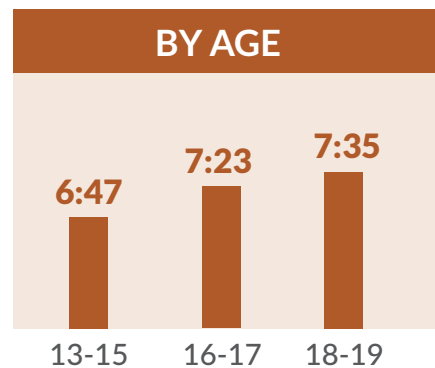
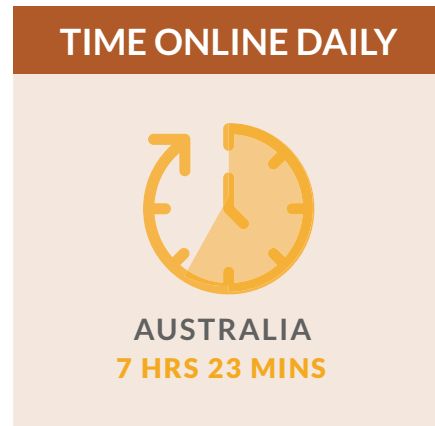


# Teens and the Internet

This is the most digitally connected generation the world has ever seen. Teens grew up on the Internet, have had smartphones in their hands from a young age, and have never known a world without social media.

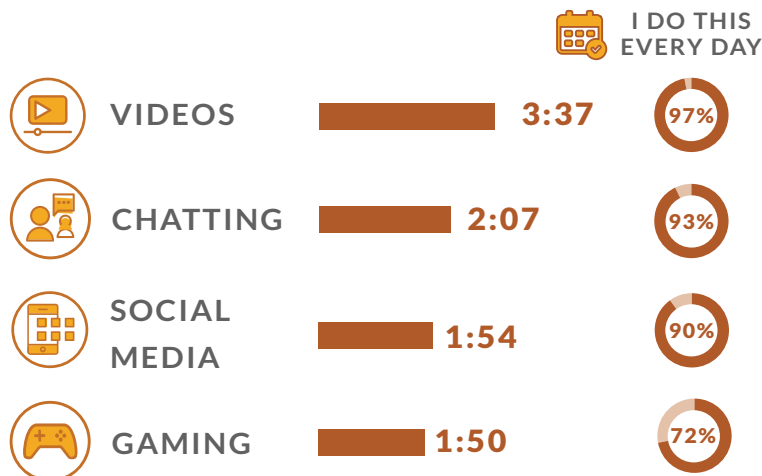
Being internet-connected was a requirement for participation in this research study. One of the primary objectives of this research initiative was to investigate the effects of digital connectedness on this generation's views, beliefs, and behaviors.

Teens in Australia are spending an average of 7 hours and 23 minutes online daily.<sup>1</sup> Time online was seen to trend up with age.



## ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Australian teens say their number one online activity is watching videos, followed by talking, messaging, or video chatting. Boys and girls spend similar amounts of time on each activity, except for gaming. Boys spend more than twice as much time gaming online daily than girls (2:39 vs 1:01).



<sup>1</sup> Note that data was collected in June - July 2020. Teens were not specifically asked to exclude time spent online for school purposes.

# Teens and Social Media

Nine in ten Australian teens are using social media daily—primarily to connect with friends and family and to find funny or entertaining content. Boys and girls have similar reasons for their time spent on social media, although girls are more likely than boys to follow celebrities or brands (20% vs. 7%).

Though most check their feeds daily, more than half of Australian teens (61%) said they spend an hour or less on social media every day. They also responded with mixed emotions about their experiences.

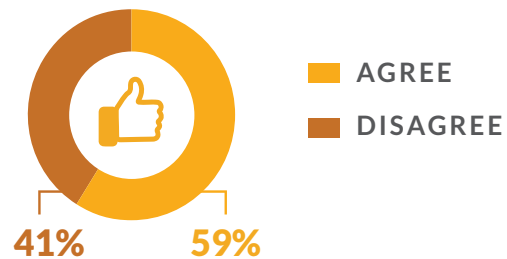
Most say social media helps them feel satisfied with their lives. An almost equal number, however, said these platforms can generate feelings of sadness, anxiety or depression. Girls as well as older teens are more negatively affected by social media than boys or younger teens.

## REASONS I USE SOCIAL MEDIA<sup>1</sup>

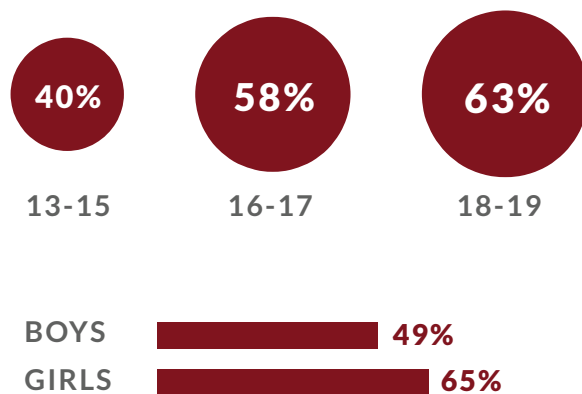
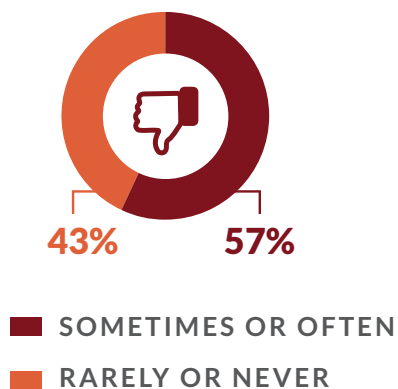


- 1 **Connect with friends and family: 69%**
- 2 **Find funny or entertaining content: 63%**
- 3 **Help me stay informed: 34%**
- 4 **Follow celebrities or brands: 14%**
- 5 **Let the world know more about me: 3%**

Social media helps me feel satisfied with my



Social media makes me feel sad, anxious, or depressed



<sup>1</sup> Note that respondents could choose up to two answers for this question, meaning percentages do not add to 100%.

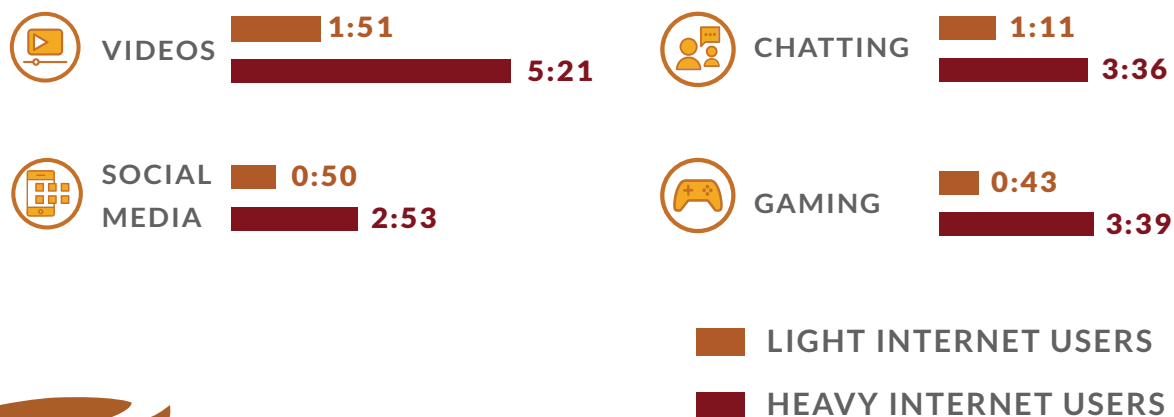
# The Influence of the Internet

We received a wide variety of responses from teens regarding their usage habits and time online, prompting us to categorize respondents as light internet users (0-4 hours online daily) and heavy internet users (10+ hours online daily).

In Australia, 1 in 4 teens were seen to be heavy internet users, averaging more than 12 hours online daily. Heavy internet users spend much more time on every activity, notably watching videos and gaming.



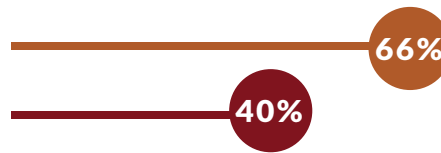
## TIME SPENT BY ACTIVITY



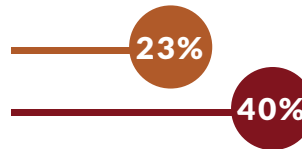
## INFLUENCES BY TIME ONLINE



I go to **family** most often for information or guidance about what is **right and wrong**.



I go **online** most often for information or guidance about **gender and sexuality**.



Time spent online is seen to make a big difference in the voices teens listen to. Heavy internet users are much less likely than light internet users to say they go to family for guidance on what is right and wrong. In addition, they are much more likely to rely on the Internet and social media for advice on gender and sexuality.

Interestingly, time online was not seen to make a significant difference in a teen's mental health struggles or suicide risk. This was a departure from the trend observed in the global study, which showed that heavy internet users experienced more struggles than light internet users.

# Conclusions

Managing their digital lives, relationships, and interactions alongside in-person experiences has become standard for this generation. Digital media remains a constant presence and daily influence on the lives of Australian teens. Anyone interacting with this generation must consider the impact these platforms are having on today's teens.

- **VIDEOS ARE THIS GENERATION'S LANGUAGE.**  
Videos are part of every teen's daily life and are a key way they interact with the world and each other. As the church, we are called to bring the Gospel to people where they are. How can we creatively use this medium to reach young people for Christ?
- **SOCIAL MEDIA GENERATES MIXED RESPONSES.**  
Teens check their feeds every day, but most don't spend a lot of time on these platforms. Teens are also divided on whether or not social media is helping or hurting them, with girls and older teens more negatively affected than boys and younger teens. Consider the content you are putting out for them and how you can help them navigate their complex relationship with their digital devices.
- **DIGITAL CONNECTEDNESS STILL LEAVES GAPS.**  
This generation lives in an age of nearly constant connectedness, and yet most teens still report feeling lonely. The time teens spend chatting, messaging, and watching videos does not necessarily fill the gaps in their lives or satisfy the longings of their hearts. How can we help this generation recognize their deep need for meaning and point them to the only Savior who brings eternal purpose to our lives?

# INFLUENCES AND GUIDING VOICES

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AUSTRALIA REPORT

# What We Discovered

Teens turn to **family** most often for **guidance** about topics such as right and wrong and the meaning of life.



**80%** of Australian teens report **positive family** experiences.

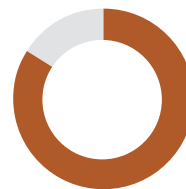
**Religious leaders or texts** were low on this generation's list of **influences**, except among Committed Christians who do seek advice from their pastors or their Bibles.



**3 in 4** teens say they talk to their parents about important issues at least sometimes.



A **personal experience**, such as an answer to prayer, is the top reason a teen would **change their mind** about a religious belief.



**84%** of teens say they have **close friends** who know them well.

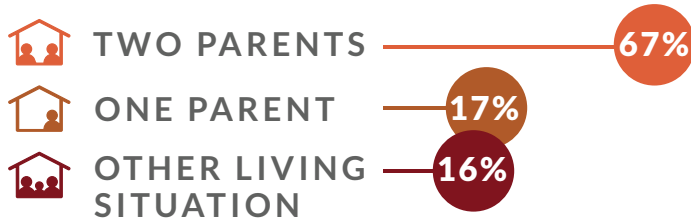




# Family and Friend Relationships

Two in three Australian teens report that they live in a two-parent household. Encouragingly, most teens also say their family experience has been good overall, regardless of their living situation.

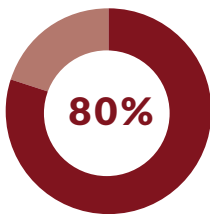
## HOUSEHOLD



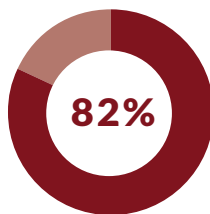
## FAMILY SATISFACTION

My family experience has been good

### AUSTRALIA



### GLOBAL



Christian teens report higher family satisfaction than teens of no religion.



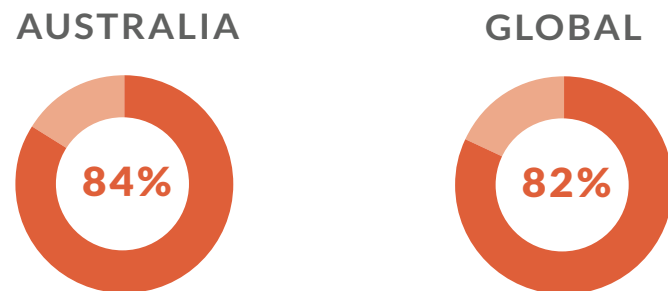
## PARENT CONVERSATIONS

We asked teens to tell us how often they talk to their parents about issues that really matter to them. The vast majority of teens said these conversations do occur at least sometimes or often.



## FRIENDSHIP SATISFACTION

I have close friends who know me well.



The majority of Australian teens also report strong relationships outside their families. More than four in five teens say they have close friends who know them well. Boys were more likely than girls to report these close friendships (88% vs 81%).

84% OF TEENS  
HAVE CLOSE  
FRIENDS WHO  
KNOW THEM  
WELL.

# Who Teens Listen To

We were curious about this generation's biggest influences. Who do they trust for guidance and advice? When it comes to some of life's most important questions, what voices are they listening to?

Our survey revealed that family is an important guiding voice for young people. Teens tell us they turn to family first for guidance on some of life's most important topics such as right and wrong and the meaning of life. Boys were more likely than girls to say they rely on family for advice on the meaning of life.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, teens who report a positive family experience are much more likely to consult parents for guidance on morality as compared to teens who have had a negative family experience (58% vs 22%).

## RIGHT AND WRONG CONVERSATIONS



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

- 1 FAMILY 51%  
Global 50%
- 2 FRIENDS/PEERS 19%
- 3 ONLINE/SOCIAL MEDIA 15%
- 4 TEACHERS/COUNSELORS 6%
- 5 RELIGIOUS LEADERS/TEXTS 5%
- 6 OFFLINE MEDIA 4%

## MEANING OF LIFE CONVERSATIONS

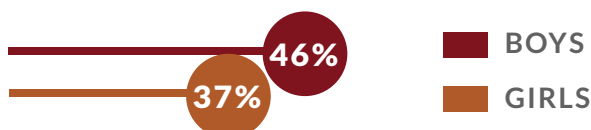


Where I go most often for information or guidance about the meaning of life:

- 1 FAMILY 41%  
Global 41%
- 2 FRIENDS/PEERS 22%
- 3 ONLINE/SOCIAL MEDIA 21%
- 4 RELIGIOUS LEADERS/TEXTS 7%
- 5 TEACHERS/COUNSELORS 5%
- 6 OFFLINE MEDIA 3%

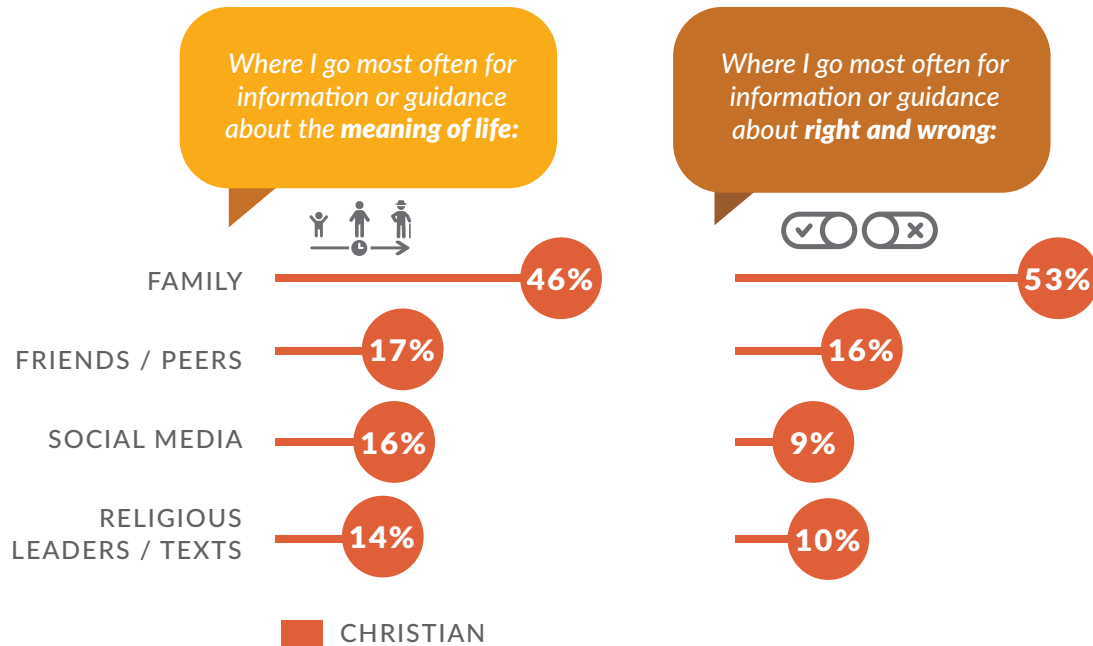
## FAMILY INFLUENCE BY GENDER

I go to family most often for guidance about the meaning of



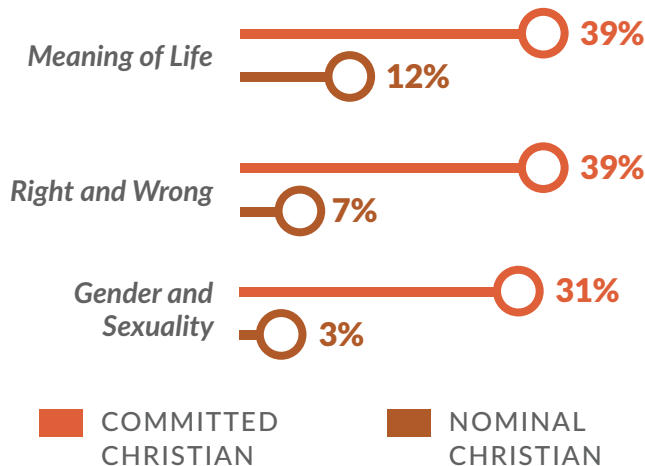
## THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH

Looking at Christian teens specifically, we see that this generation of believers is rarely going to pastors or the Bible as their primary source for guidance. Religious leaders and texts were consistently among the lowest influences on their list across all the topics we asked about. Committed Christians, however, consult religious leaders and Scripture much more than Nominal Christians.<sup>1</sup>



## THE INFLUENCE OF SCRIPTURE

I go to religious leaders or texts for information or guidance about...



1. Note that the number of Committed Christians in our sample was small, so related percentages should be carefully considered.

# What Would Change their Minds

We were curious to know what might influence teens to change their religious beliefs. Australian teens are similar to their global peers in saying they would prefer a personal experience, such as an answer to prayer. However, they were also quite likely to say they would do their own investigation online or in books.

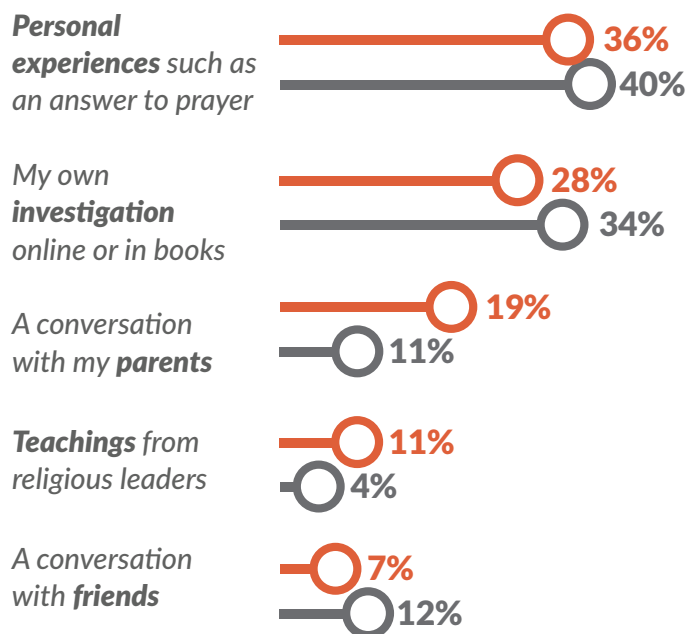
For some teens, conversations with their parents or friends or teachings from religious leaders could also be persuasive. Christian and non-religious teens were similar in preferring a personal experience.

WHAT WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT A RELIGIOUS BELIEF:



## THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH

What would be most likely to change my mind about a religious belief:



CHRISTIAN      NON-RELIGIOUS

# Conclusions

As today's generation navigates life's complex and confusing questions, the voices they are listening to are critical. The sources young people trust and turn to shed insight on what they will believe. And what you believe has profound implications for how you will behave.

- **PARENTS HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE.**  
Teens say family members are important conversation partners on some of life's biggest questions. Parents have countless opportunities to listen to and disciple their children on a daily basis. We know teens need people around them as they face life's challenges and questions. How might we strengthen families and help parents continue to be trusted guides in the lives of their teens?
- **SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH'S TEACHINGS ARE NOT A PRIMARY INFLUENCE.**  
Even for many Christian teens and youth, God's Word is not the first place they go for counsel. How can we create safe spaces for teens to wrestle with life's hard questions and engage the Bible as a trusted guide?
- **THIS GENERATION CRAVES AUTHENTIC PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF FAITH.**  
Christianity is far more than just a set of beliefs to ascribe to. This generation wants to engage with faith personally and powerfully. How can we create opportunities for teens to encounter God and experience His goodness and faithfulness in their lives?

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

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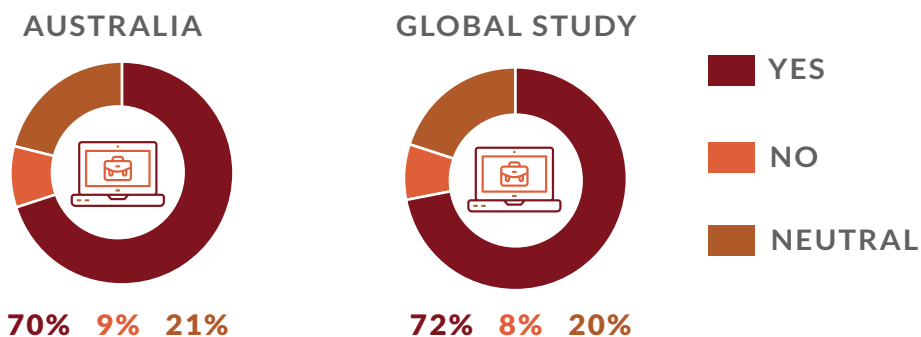
AUSTRALIA REPORT

# Looking to the Future

We wanted to know about this generation's educational goals and career priorities as they look to their future. Similar to their global peers, the majority of teens in Australia agree that education is the primary thing that will guarantee them a better future.

## VIEWS ON EDUCATION

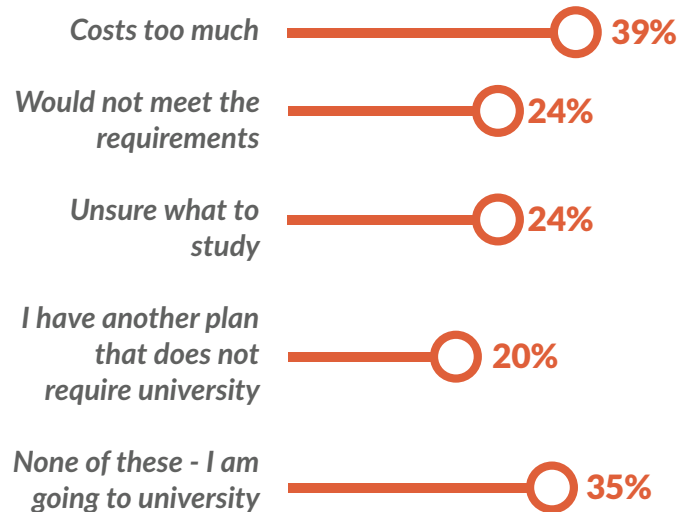
Education is the primary thing that will guarantee me a better future.



However, many teens could think of a challenge or two that might stop them from going to university. The cost of attending was a popular answer, as well as not meeting the requirements or being unsure what to study.

1 in 5 teens said they have another plan that does not require higher education. But more than 1 in 3 said none of these challenges applied and that they were definitely going to university.

### What would stop me from going to

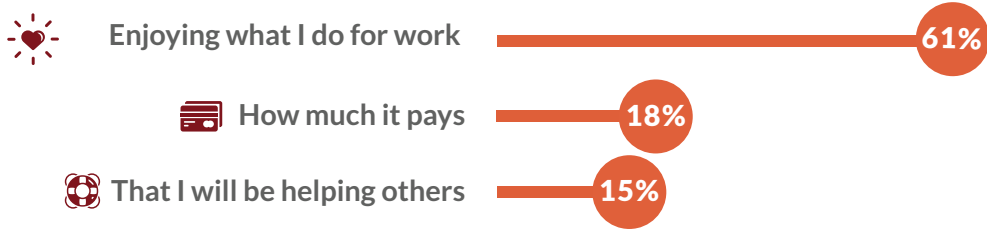


1 Note that respondents could choose up to two answers to this question, meaning the percentages do not add to 100%



## CAREER PRIORITIES

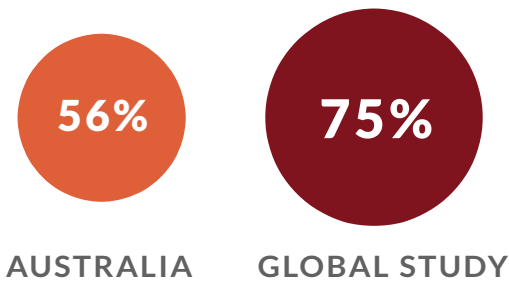
The most important thing in my future career is:



Australian teens responded confidently about what they are looking for in a future career. Their top priority is enjoying what they do for work. How much that job pays is a much lower priority.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDES

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



Australian teens were much less entrepreneurial than the rest of their global generation. Just over half said they would like to start a business or own their own company in the future, as compared with 3 in 4 teens in the global study.

# About OneHope

In partnership with local churches, ministries, and governments around the world, OneHope has reached more than 1.7 billion children and youth with God's Word. Based on in-country research OneHope conducts, Scripture programs are designed to be age and culturally relevant. Since 1987, OneHope has helped kids experience God's Story, sharing the life-changing message of hope with children and youth in every country. [onehope.net](https://onehope.net)

## Methodology

This study surveyed 420 teens across Australia who answered 72 questions about their beliefs and behaviors. The number of teens surveyed was sufficient to ensure these results accurately represent the beliefs and behaviors of youth ages 13-19 in Australia. The research survey was distributed via an online panel to young people who have regular access to the Internet.

Data was collected from June 25th—July 11th, 2020, which was in the middle of national lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we believe this data provides key insights into the mindset and behaviors of teens living in uncertain times. With regards to their digital activity, teens were not specifically instructed to exclude time spent online for school purposes from their estimates of total time spent online daily.

### QUESTIONS?

[Contact research@onehope.net](mailto:research@onehope.net)

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Suggested citation:  
OneHope. (June 2021). Global Youth Culture, Australia Report.  
[www.globalyouthculture.net](https://www.globalyouthculture.net)

# Definitions

## CHRISTIANS

Teens who self-identified as Christian, but not as Jehovah's Witness or Mormon.

## COMMITTED CHRISTIANS

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

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

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

## NOMINAL CHRISTIANS

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

## NON-CHRISTIANS

Teens who said they were of another religion besides Christianity such as Buddhist, Hindu, Jew, Muslim or other; as well as teens who reported they had no religion including atheists and agnostics.

## NON-RELIGIOUS

Teens who reported they had no religion, or identified as atheist or agnostic.



# GLOBAL YOUTH CULTURE