

A nationally representative survey of attitudes and beliefs about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members

The B. H. Roberts Foundation (BHR) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that supports education and research related to Mormonism.

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Introduction

The 2022 B. H. Roberts Foundation National Latter-day Saint Survey (2022 BHR NLDSS) is a representative survey of 1,157 respondents sampled using Momentive's national panel. The survey asks about attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The survey is self-weighted, which means that it is representative of the United States without having to include weights in the analysis. This is done by targeting a quota of different demographic groups. In this case, the survey was balanced based on age and gender. In all figures and tables, percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

The self-weighting made the responses to this survey similar to responses in other more established surveys. For example, we asked the exact same question about belief in God that the 2021 General Social Survey did and found a similar distribution of responses.

Which statement comes closest to expressing what you believe about God?

	2021 GSS (%)	2022 BHR NLDS (%)
I don't believe in God	7	10
I don't know whether there is a God and I don't believe there is a way to find out	9	12
I don't believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a Higher Power of some kind	13	14
I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at others	5	9
While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God	16	13
I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it	50	42

Findings

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

How much do people know?

To understand what people know about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter "the Church"), the 2022 BHR NLDSS asked respondents what they felt their level of knowledge was about the Church and then gave them a brief quiz. The quiz consisted of five short true-or-false questions, included below, about the beliefs and practices of members of the Church.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) . . .

- · Can live with more than one wife
- · Can't eat chocolate
- Can't drink alcohol
- · Can't have blood transfusions
- Believe Christ is the Son of God

Respondents could answer *True, False, or I don't know* for each item. Correct *True* or *False* responses counted for one point. Incorrect *True* or *False* answers subtracted one point. An answer of *I don't know* neither added nor subtracted points. As such, many incorrect answers could result in an overall negative score.

Most People Know Very Little About Latter-day Saints

4 out of 5 respondents failed the quiz. The average point score of all respondents was .99.

Other surprising results included:

- Only 34% of respondents correctly answered that Latter-day Saints cannot live with more than one wife.
- 15% incorrectly answered that Latter-day Saints cannot eat chocolate.
- 23% incorrectly answered that Latter-day Saints cannot have blood transfusions.

If a failing grade of "F" is given for less than 60% correct answers (less than 4 correct answers in this quiz), 84% of respondents failed.

People who have a college degree or know a member personally know a lot more about the Church²

Respondents with a college degree scored 78% higher than those without a college degree.³ Similarly, respondents who said they personally know a Latter-day Saint scored 63% higher than those who did not.⁴

People who did poorly on the quiz think they're as knowledgeable as people who did well on the quiz

Personally know a

Latter-day Saint

Do not personally

know a Latter-day Saint

Interestingly, there is a relationship between how much respondents said they know about the Church and how much they actually knew on the quiz.

Most respondents signaled they did not know much about the Church or its members and gave quiz answers that supported that self-assessment. Respondents that had a negative score and respondents that had a positive score on the test were both significantly more likely to think they knew a lot about the Church than people who scored 0.

With a college

degree

No college degree

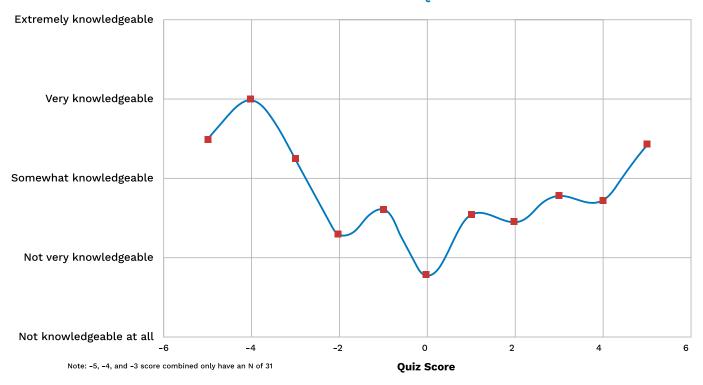
²A multiple regression analysis controlling for a host of other socio-demographic covariates only yielded significant findings for education, how many Latter-day Saints they knew, and whether they had a Latter-day Saint background. Muslims were also significantly less likely to score well, but that sample was relatively small.

³1.19 v .67, significant to the p<.001 level.

^{41.20} v. .74, significant to the p<.001 level

Figure 2:

SELF-RATED KNOWLEDGE AND QUIZ SCORE



People Who Don't Like Members Don't Know a Lot About the Church

Respondents who stated that they like members of the Church scored 3x higher on the quiz than respondents who said they dislike members.⁵

Sources of Knowledge

The 2022 BHR NLDSS asked respondents for their top two sources of information about the Church. About 1 in 5 respondents selected the "I don't know anything about Mormons" option. The remaining 4 out 5 answers are shown below.

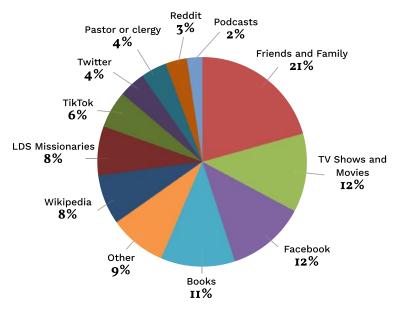
The most common response was "Friends and Family" at 21%, and then "TV Shows and Movies," "Facebook," and "Books" brought up the next most common categories at about 12% each.

Other sources such as pastors, missionaries or non-Facebook social media were represented in single-digit percentages.

^{61.5} v .5 at p < .001. A similar comparison for people who did not like the Church barely missed significance at p=.055. However, when inserted into a linear regression analysis that included people who "neither like nor dislike" the Church and its members both the attitudes towards the Church and attitudes towards members were significant. Furthermore, both remained significant when personally knowing a Latter-day Saint was controlled for, as that has a plausibly spurious relationship with liking members and/or the Church and knowing about the Church.

Figure 3

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST USED SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT LATTER-DAY SAINTS (MORMONS)?

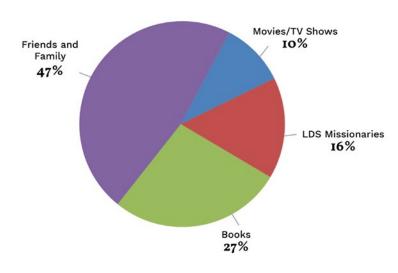


*Data excludes respondents that answered "I don't know anything about Mormons"

Older people use more traditional sources for information about Latter-day Saints

Not surprisingly, the top source of information varies significantly by age. For example, of the quarter of the sample that was over 60 years old, the only major (>5%) sources of information "Friends or Family," "Books," "LDS Missionaries," and "Movies/TV Shows."

MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT LATTER-DAY SAINTS (AGE >60 YEARS)

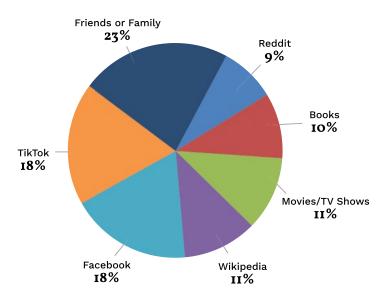


*Data excludes respondents that answered "I don't know anything about Mormons"

Younger people use social media as sources for information about Latter-day Saints

For the 21% of the sample ages 18-29 years old the major (>5%) sources of information included social media, specifically TikTok and Facebook.

MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT LATTER-DAY SAINTS (AGE 18-29 YEARS)



*Data excludes respondents that answered "I don't know anything about Mormons"

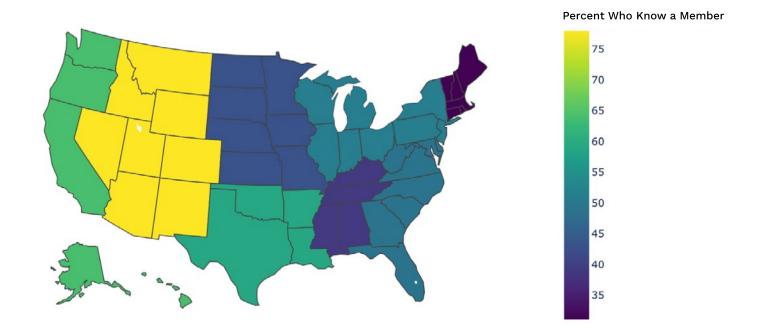
Social media combined appears to be the most used source of information for the youngest cohort by far, while for the older generation the most used source is friends and family.

Personal ties to Church members

When asked how many "Mormons or Latter-day Saints" the respondent personally knew, the average response was 2.2.6 However, nearly half (46%) of respondents did not know any members at all. This varies depending on location, with only 22% of respondents in the Mountain West – the center of gravity for the Church – not knowing a member, whereas in New England a large majority (69%) did not know a member.

The top range, which accounted for 7.6% of the sample, was truncated at knowing 10 or more Latter-day Saints, so the long end of the distribution is underweighted.

CENSUS REGION BY PERCENT WHO KNOW A MEMBER



Experiences talking about the Church

About half the US don't have any Latter-day Saint friends or relatives

About half (48%) of respondents stated that they don't "have any Mormon friends or relatives." Of the respondents that did have "Mormon friends or relatives," a third had never spoken to their friends or relatives about the Church.

People are evenly split about whether their experience talking about the Church was a pleasant or unpleasant experience

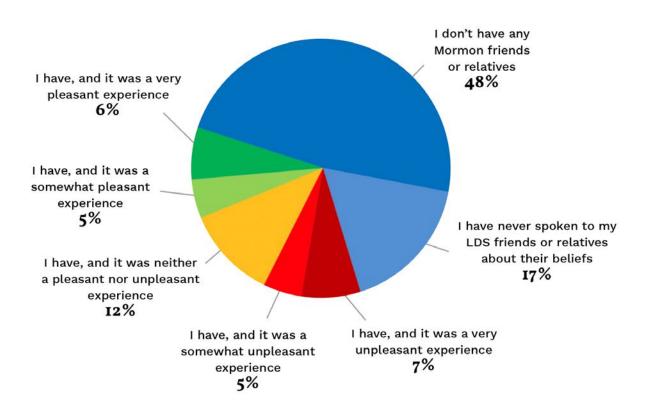
Of those who had Latter-day Saint friends or relatives and had spoken to them about the Church,

- · about a third said it was an unpleasant experience (either somewhat or "very"),
- · a third said it was a pleasant experience,
- and a third said it was neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

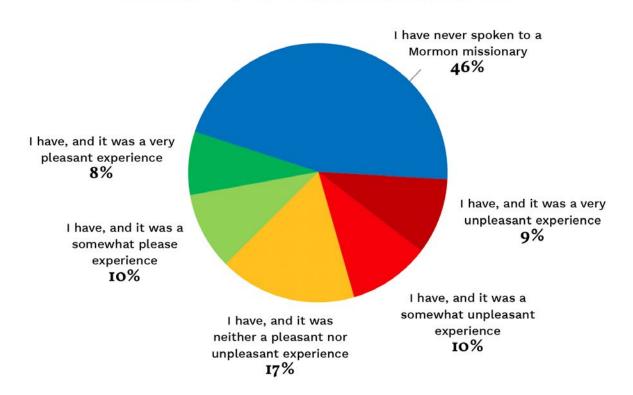
About half (46%) of all respondents had never spoken to a Latter-day Saint missionary. Of those who had.

- slightly more than one third (36%) said it was an unpleasant experience,
- 31% said it was neither pleasant nor unpleasant,
- and 32% said it was pleasant.

HAVE ANY OF YOUR LATTER-DAY SAINT (MORMON) FRIENDS OR RELATIVES SPOKEN TO YOU ABOUT THEIR BELIEFS? IF SO, HOW AS THE EXPERIENCE?



HAVE YOU EVER SPOKE TO A LETTER-DAY SAINT (MORMON) MISSIONARY? IF SO, HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE?



ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CHURCH AND ITS MEMBERS

Liking or disliking the Church and its members

Two questions were asked to gauge attitudes towards the Church and its members:

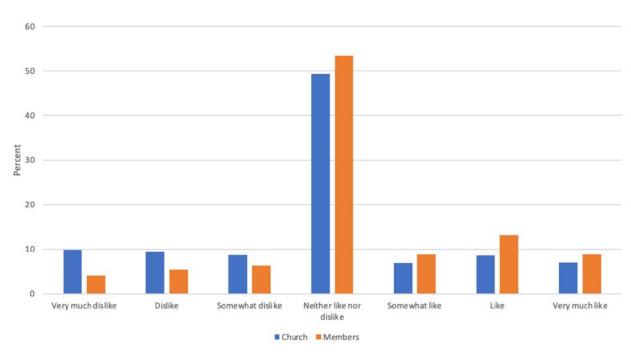
- "Please rate how much you like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon Church)" and
- "Please rate how much you like the Latter-day Saint (Mormon) people."

Answers for each question ranged from "very much dislike" to "very much like," and were assigned a point value from 0 to 6, respectively. Point totals from respondents were then used to compare sentiments between different demographics.

Most people don't have strong feelings about the Church or its members one way or the other

Most BHR NLDSS respondents did not have a strong opinion one way or the other about the Church or its members, with around half indicating that they neither like nor dislike the Church or its members. This resulted in a neutral sentiment point score of around 3.7

ATTITUDES TOWARDS MEMEBERS AND THE CHURCH



The average for the Church was 2.9. With 3 being "neither like nor dislike," sentiment about the Church is slightly unfavorable. About 10% of the sample gave the lowest score of "very much dislike" and 7% gave the maximum score of "very much like." Conversely, people are slightly favorable towards members of the Church themselves, with an average score of 3.3.

So, who dislikes the Mormons? Who likes them?

The 197 survey respondents who identified as sexual and/or gender minorities (including people who identify as bisexual, transgender, gay, queer, or lesbian) liked the Church or its members less than others, even when controlling for political affiliation. The sentiment of these respondents, on average, was between "somewhat disliking" and "neither liking nor disliking." Compared to the average of all other BHR NLDSS respondents, sexual and/or gender minorities liked the Church 19% less and church members 20% less.⁸

131 respondents self-identified as Evangelical Protestants. This group was not significantly different from all other respondents in how much they like the Church.⁹ This might be surprising, given the popular portrayal of antipathy between Evangelicals and Latter-day Saints.

Both Catholics and Muslims were both more favorable than average towards both the Church and its members. However, "Nones"—respondents who did not identify with any religious group—are less favorable, especially toward the Church itself. Responses from all other faith traditions were not consistently significant in their sentiment towards members and the Church.



While Latter-day Saints tend to be more politically conservative, respondents who either identified as Republican or Republican-leaning only scored 13% higher on liking members than those who did not.¹⁰

Generally speaking, religious and politically conservative respondents liked the Church and its members more than others.¹¹

 $^{^82.8 \}text{ v } 3.4 \text{ for members at p <.001, and } 2.4 \text{ v } 3 \text{ for the Church also at p <.001.}$

⁹They are almost more likely to like members, but the difference just misses the cutoff for significance (significance requires a "p-value" of .05, and they scored a .06), so there is some suggestive evidence that they Evangelical Protestants like Latter-day Saints more than average.

^{103.6} v 3.2 with a p<.001 for members, and 3.2 v 2.8 at p<.001 for the Church.

¹¹Age bracket (60+, 18-29) and whether they attended college were not consistently significantly related to both attitudes towards members and the Church. However, a larger sample size may have been able to detect consistent age and college effects.

Are Latter-day Saints Christian?

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints identify as Christian. Historically, this fact has been a point of disagreement with some groups, particularly among some Christian denominations. However, disagreement about this issue may stem from lack of knowledge about what the Church believes as much as from a disagreement about what a "true Christian" is.

Most people who know what the Church believes about Christ identify Latter-day Saints as Christian

Of respondents who correctly responded that Latter-day Saints believe Christ is the Son of God:

- only 17% said that Latter-day Saints are not Christian,
- 11% said they don't know,
- · and 73% identified members as Christian.

People who don't view Latter-day Saints as Christian generally don't know that they believe that Christ is the Son of God

Of the respondents who didn't see Latter-day Saints as Christian, only a third were able to correctly answer the question about the Latter-day Saint belief in Christ as the Son of God.

Evangelical Protestants are less likely to view Latter-day Saints as Christian

Evangelical Protestants are 71% more likely to say explicitly that Latter-day Saints are not Christians than non-Evangelical Protestants.¹²

Furthermore, controlling for knowledge about Latter-day Saint beliefs about Christ does not significantly change the results, suggesting that Evangelical Protestants aren't less likely to view Latter-day Saints as Christians due to a lack of knowledge.

Non-Religious people are more likely to view Latter-day Saints as Christian

Conversely, "Nones" who did not identify with any religious group were 24% more likely to view Latter-day Saints as Christian.¹³

To summarize, Evangelical Protestants like the Church and its members more, but are less willing to identify Latter-day Saints as Christians. On the other hand, those who do not associate with a faith are less favorable towards the Church and its members but are more willing to identify Latter-day Saints as Christians.

RESPONDENT BELIEFS AND LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Shared beliefs

Some beliefs that are often viewed as unique to Latter-day Saints are actually shared by other Christians and religious people in general.

Christians who believe in an afterlife generally believe they will be with their family in the afterlife

Of traditional Christian respondents (Catholics, Evangelical Protestants, non-Evangelical Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox) who agreed to some extent in an afterlife, more than half (51%) "strongly" agreed that they will be with their family in the afterlife, while 26% "somewhat" agreed.

A lot of Christians believe in eternal marriage

Of Christian respondents who believe in an afterlife, about 40% said that "people married in this life will be married in the afterlife," with 22% "strongly" agreeing and 18% "somewhat" agreeing.

Some Christians believe they can become like God

Of Christian respondents who believe in an afterlife, about 22% said that "people can become like God in the afterlife," but only 8% "strongly" agree that this is true, while 14% "somewhat" believe.

Some Christians believe in the possibility of modern-day prophets

About 35% of Christian respondents believe that "there could be a prophet like Moses today"—13% of them responded "strongly agree," while 22% said "somewhat agree."

Some non-religious people share Latter-day Saint beliefs

Interestingly, some respondents who did not identify with any religion also hold some beliefs shared by Latter-day Saints,

- 15% of these respondents indicated belief that Jesus is their Savior,
- · about 30% believed in an afterlife,
- 24% believe that they will be with their family in the afterlife,
- 7% believe that "Humans can eventually become like God in the afterlife,"
- and 11% agree that "there can be a prophet like Moses today."

Likelihood of changing religious affiliation

To understand more of the process of changing faiths or adopting a new religion, the 2022 BHR NLDSS asked a simple question:

"How likely is it that you will change your religious affiliation between now and the end of your life?"

About half of people say that changing religious affiliation before their death is "very unlikely."

Overall, survey respondents did not show much openness to changing their religious affiliation, with almost half (48%) saying that it was "very unlikely."

More educated, but not necessarily more wealthy, people are less open to changing religious affiliation

Respondents who were wealthier were no more or less likely to state an openness to faith change.¹³

However, more educated respondents were less likely to change religious affiliation,

- 53% of respondents with a college degree were "very unlikely" to change,
- and 40% of non-college graduates said they were "very unlikely" as well.

Religious people are more likely to be open to changing their faith

Of respondents who reported they attend religious services once a month, about 46% said it is very unlikely they will change faith. By comparison, 50% of respondents who said they did not attend services were very unlikely to change.

Similarly, 46% of respondents who identified with a religion said they were very unlikely to change faith, while 58% of respondents who did not identify with any religion indicated they were very unlikely to change.

Various respondent groups showed a comparatively higher openness to changing their religious association.

- only 17% of Buddhists,
- 42% of Catholics,
- and 28% of Muslims said it is unlikely that they will ever change their faith.

Younger people and men are more open to changing their faith

There was also a significant age effect on openness to changing religious association. 74% of people 60 years old and over said that changing their faith was "highly unlikely," while this number was only 28% for 18-29 year olds.

¹³A simple linear regression between income and likelihood of conversion was insignificant.

TABLE OF PROBABILITY OF CHANGING RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION BY AGE RANGE

	>60	18-29	30-44	45-60
Very unlikely %	74	28	35	52
Unlikely %	14	14	17	13
Neither likely nor unlikely %	9	32	21	22
Likely %	1	18	14	6
Very Likely %	1	7	13	6

Finally, only 44% of male respondents said it was highly unlikely they will change religions, while 52% of female respondents said the same.

Appendix

Survery Questions

Which of the following most closely matches your current religious identification?

Evangelical Protestant
Non-Evangelical Protestant
Catholic
Jewish
Buddhist
Hindu
Other Eastern Religion

Muslim Eastern Orthodox Christian

Latter-day Saint / Mormon

None

Other (please specify)

How often do you attend religious services?

Never
Less than once a year
About once or twice a year
Several times a year
About once a month
2-3 times a month
Nearly every week
Every week
Several times a week

Taken all together, how would you say things are these days--would you say that you are very happy, pretty happy, or not too happy?

Very happy Pretty happy Not too happy

What is your marital status?

Now married Widowed Divorced Separated Never married

How many children do you have?

0 - 10+

How many Mormons or Latter-day Saints do you personally know?

0 - 10+

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent or other?

Strong Democrat
Not very strong Democrat
Independent, close to Democrat
Independent (neither, no response)
Independent, close to Republican
Not very strong Republican
Strong Republican
Other party (please specify)

Which of the following do you identify as: (Mark all that apply)

Lesbian

Bisexual

Gay

Queer

Transgender

Straight or heterosexual

Other (please specify)

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

No schooling completed

Nursery school

Grades 1 through 11

12th grade—no diploma

Regular high school diploma

GED or alternative credential

Some college credit, but less than 1 year of college

1 or more years of college credit, no degree

Associates degree (for example: AA, AS)

Bachelor's degree (for example: BA. BS)

Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)

Professional degree beyond bachelor's degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)

Doctorate degree (for example, PhD, EdD)

Please rate how much you like the Latter-day Saint (Mormon) people

Very much dislike

Dislike

Somewhat dislike

Neither like nor dislike

Somewhat like

Like

Very much like

Please rate how much you like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon

Church)

Very much dislike

Dislike

Somewhat dislike

Neither like nor dislike

Somewhat like

Like

Very much like

What has been your most used source of information about Latter-day Saints (Mormons)? (Select one)

Twitter

Facebook

Facebook

TikTok Reddit

Wikipedia

Books

Podcasts

Movies

TV Shows

Friends or Family

Pastor or clergy

LDS Missionaries

I don't know anything about Mormons

Other (please specify)

What has been your second most used source of information about Latter-day Saints (Mormons)? (Select one)

Twitter

Facebook

TikTok

Reddit

Wikipedia

Books

Podcasts

Movies

TV Shows

Friends or family

Pastor or clergy

LDS Missionaries

I don't know anything about Mormons

Other (please specify)

How knowledgeable would you say you are about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)?

Extremely knowledgeable Very knowledgeable Somewhat knowledgeable Not very knowledgeable Not knowledgeable at all

True/False: Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)

[True, False, I don't know]
Can live with more than one wife
Are Christians
Can't eat chocolate
Can't drink alcohol
Can't have blood transfusions
Believe Christ is the Son of God

Have you ever spoken to a Latter-day Saint (Mormon) missionary? If so, how was the experience? (If you have spoken to Mormon missionaries multiple times, please answer according to the most recent experience).

I have never spoken to a Mormon missionary

I have spoken to a Mormon missionary, and it was a very unpleasant experience

I have spoken to a Mormon missionary, and it was a somewhat unpleasant experience

I have spoken to a Mormon missionary, and it was neither a pleasant nor unpleasant experience

I have spoken to a Mormon missionary, and it was somewhat pleasant experience

I have spoken to a Mormon missionary, and it was very pleasant experience

Have any of your Latter-day Saint (Mormon) friends or relatives spoken to you about their beliefs? If so, how was the experience? (If you have spoken to your friends or relatives multiple times, please answer according to the most recent experience).

I don't have any Mormon friends or relatives

I have never spoken to my Mormon friends or relatives about their beliefs

I have spoken to a Mormon friend or relative about their beliefs, and it was a very unpleasant experience

I have spoken to a Mormon friend or relative about their beliefs, and it was a somewhat unpleasant experience

I have spoken to a Mormon friend or relative about their beliefs, and it was neither a pleasant nor unpleasant experience

I have spoken to a Mormon friend or relative about their beliefs, and it was somewhat pleasant experience

I have spoken to a Mormon friend or relative about their beliefs, and it was very pleasant experience

Which of the following are things that you believe?

[Strongly disagree, Somewhat disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat agree, Strongly agree] Jesus is my Savior

There is an afterlife

I will be with my family in the afterlife

People married in this life will be married in the afterlife

Humans can eventually become like God in the afterlife

There could be a prophet like Moses today

How likely is it that you will change your religious affiliation between now and the end of your life?

Very likely

Likely

Neither likely nor unlikely

Unlikely

Very unlikely

Which statement comes closest to expressing what you believe about God?

I don't believe in God

I don't know whether there is a God and I don't believe there is a way to find out

I don't believe in a personal God, but I do believe in a Higher Power of some kind

I find myself believing in God some of the time, but not at others

While I have doubts, I feel that I do believe in God

I know God really exists and I have no doubts about it

What is your race?

White

Black or African American

Asian

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

American Indian or Alaska Native

Other (please specify)

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

Yes

No

Demographics

The demographic characteristics of the 2022 BHR NLDS survey are reported below.

Sexual and Gender Minorities (Categories are Not Mutually Exclusive)

	N	%
Lesbian	36	3.11
Bisexual	98	8.48
Gay	44	3.81
Queer	26	2.25
Transgender	11	0.95
Other Sex	11	0.95

Race and Ethnicity

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White	73.10%	845
Black or African American	7.01%	81
Asian	12.02%	139
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2.25%	26
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.38%	16
Other (please specify)	4.24%	49
TOTAL		1,156

Hispanic

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	14.45%	167
No	85.55%	989
TOTAL		1,156

Age

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
< 18	0.00%	0
18-29	20.59%	238
30-44	26.82%	310
45-60	27.68%	320
> 60	24.91%	288
TOTAL		1,156

Income

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
\$0-\$9,999	6.31%	73
\$10,000-\$24,999	9.00%	104
\$25,000-\$49,999	18.34%	212
\$50,000-\$74,999	16.61%	192
\$75,000-\$99,999	13.58%	157
\$100,000-\$124,999	10.21%	118
\$125,000-\$149,999	4.33%	50
\$150,000-\$174,999	3.72%	43
\$175,000-\$199,999	2.77%	32
\$200,000+	6.31%	73
Prefer not to answer	8.82%	102
TOTAL		1,156

Region

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
East North Central	15.07%	171
East South Central	6.26%	71
Middle Atlantic	15.15%	172
Mountain	5.55%	63
New England	4.85%	55
Pacific	20.70%	235
South Atlantic	19.03%	216
West North Central	4.05%	46
West South Central	9.34%	106
TOTAL		1,135

Gender

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	46.80%	541
Female	53.20%	615
TOTAL		1,156