

# **LUTHERAN YOUTH AND THEIR RESPONSE TO THE SOCIETY THEY LIVE IN The Lutheran Youth Fellowship Youth Poll, 1980-2013**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

This presentation considers 30 years of survey research. Interesting observations considering youth responses (noting gender differences) and varying ways that data has been collected (hand tabulation, scanned responses, survey monkey) will be shared. (Research Goals: A. The degree to which LCMS youth are in agreement or opposition with LCMS positions; B. The degree to which youth conform to the trends and tendencies of our society and culture, and; C. To identify what issues and concerns are on the hearts and minds of youth.)

Numbers in parenthesis (e.g., C-0) refer to the page numbers of survey questions in the charts materials

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The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) was identified by the National Study of Youth and Religion as a “Conservative Protestant” denomination. The LCMS holds to the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible as God’s Word. The LCMS practices infant baptism. It is largely pro-life, creationist, and traditional in terms of worship and liturgy even though there are exceptions to those broad generalities. It is a church body with 2.5 million members of which about 100,000 are high school aged youth. It has a long history in youth ministry dating back to its first President, Dr. C.F.W. Walther who, in the late 1800’s, said to his seminary students, “You cannot use your time to better advantage than by serving well the young people of the congregation.”

The LCMS has held twelve denominational youth gatherings, the first being held in 1980. Prior to that, the synod had participated in two pan Lutheran Gatherings, in 1973 in Houston, TX and in 1976 in New Orleans LA. Until 1968, the synod’s youth were generally engaged in the programs of the Walther League, the youth ministry organization associated with the LCMS. The League was founded in 1893 and named in honor of Dr. C.F.W. Walther, the first President of the LCMS. In 1848, Walther had established a “youth group”(young men’s society) at the church he pastored in St. Louis, at historic Trinity Lutheran Church in the Soulard neighborhood. This organization provided the model for other Lutheran churches in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Annual conventions at a congregational, zone (small regional areas), districts and national levels were an important aspect of the League’s program. The whole idea of “gathering” has been a part of Lutheran youth ministry throughout history and continues to this very day.

At each of the national events, the LCMS Youth Office has conducted a youth poll under the auspices of the denominational youth organization, Lutheran Youth Fellowships. A goal of the poll is to measure the degree to which LCMS youth are in agreement or opposition with LCMS positions. A second goal is to measure the degree to which LCMS youth conform to the trends

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and tendencies of our society and culture. A final goal is to identify what issues and concerns are on the hearts and minds of LCMS youth and how, then, does the LCMS youth ministry office respond to their concerns.

The Poll has been taken at every Gathering since 1980 resulting in 12 polls. The next Youth Gathering takes place in the summer of 2016. Some questions have evolved over the years. On the 1980 and '83 Poll there was a question about whether they were in favor of a Constitutional Amendment to ban abortion. Now the question whether the person is pro-life or pro-choice. The Poll has been relatively free to ask any question, e.g. Are you sexually active? But, curiously, there has never been a question about creationism/evolution, probably assuming that LCMS youth are all creationists.

While an analysis of the data was done for each of the individual gatherings, there has never been a study of how LCMS youth have and are trending in today's culture over the years. This paper looks at how responses and behaviors have coursed over the more than 30 years the polls have been taken. From a denomination point of view, LCMS youth have gotten and continue to get most doctrine and practice responses "correct." In other ways on other issues, LCMS kids trend in opposition to LCMS tradition. On some issues, LCMS kids have swung back and forth. On some issues the positions between boys and girls has swung back and forth. And on some issues/current events, for LCMS youth they were concerns at one Gathering and didn't surface again.

The responses to the Poll have entirely voluntary and self reporting. Over the 35 years, the data was collected in a variety of ways. The early polls were printed on white paper and hand tabulated, very low tech. With the response growing larger with each Gathering, the '92 event looked for a new way to receive the data. An experiment with voting machines was mostly successful and a good civics lesson. Starting in 1995, data was collected on "answer sheets"

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much like one would use in high school. The last 2010 and 2013 Polls were collected on Survey Monkey.

Since 1980, there have been 12 National LCMS Youth Gatherings. Listed here with year, theme, location and number of participants, the Gatherings are:

- 1980 - Rejoice In His Presence, Ft. Collins CO, 4,500 youth and adults
- 1983 – Amigos de Cristo, San Antonio, TX, 10,000 youth and adults
- 1986 – On Wings Like Eagles, Washington, DC, 15,000 youth and adults
- 1989 – Blessed in the Journey, Denver, CO, 17,500 youth and adults
- 1992 – A Time for Joy, New Orleans, LA, 22,500 youth and adults
- 1995 – River of Light, S an Antonio, TX, 28,000 youth and adults
- 1998 – Called to Be, Atlanta, GA, 30,000 youth and adults
- 2001 – Higher Ground, New Orleans, LA, 33,000
- 2004 - Beyond Imagination, Orlando, FL, 35,00 youth and adults
- 2007 - Chosen, Orlando, FL, 25,000 youth and adults (Gathering returned to Orlando after New Orleans, the original 2004 site, was hit by Hurricane Katrina), 32,000
- 2010 - We Believe, New Orleans, LA, 24,000 youth and adults
- 2013 - Liv(e)Loved, San Antonio, TX, 25,000 youth and adults

## **A POLL IS BORN**

The Lutheran Youth Fellowship Youth Poll was born as plans were being made for organizations that might be interested in being exhibitors at the first, 1980 National LCMS Youth Gathering NYG. Organizers didn't want typical exhibits where people walked past the booths, maybe picked up a brochure and walked on. Planners decided that exhibitors should plan some kind of experiential learning center that would somehow connect teens to the ministry of the organization. A goal was to truly engage participants in learning about the ministry.

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Out of that goal and the new youth organization, LCMS youth ministry came up with the LYF Youth Poll. The goal – to find out where LCMS youth were trending (although that wasn't a trendy concept in 1980). Hot button topics would be posed with multiple choice responses. It seemed like a good plan – to know where our youth were falling. But there was a risk. What if our youth answered the poll "wrong." Would it mean that the youth ministry office was not up to its mandate? It could be argued that we needed to know what our teens were thinking, especially if we wanted to create materials and resources that would be helpful to our youth.

The first poll included a question about church fellowship and whether the LCMS should be in fellowship with the American Lutheran Church (ALC). 25% were in favor but 44% said they needed more information. There were doctrinal issues confronting the LCMS and ALC and the poll indicated that youth weren't convinced one way or another. The church needed to provide some explanation about the issue. (Later in this paper, we will provide how the response to church fellowship has evolved.)

Women's ordination was (and is) a question (C-33), in part because other Lutherans were (and continue to) ordaining women. 28% favored it, 39% were opposed. 25% said they needed more information.

78% were opposed to legalization of marijuana in 1980 (C-16). 51% opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. On the subject of a military draft, 30% favored registering men only; 29% for registering men and women; 27% opposed registering anyone, man or woman, in peacetime.

The first poll was printed on white paper, hand sorted and tabulated by youth staff. Nearly 600 of the 4,500 participants took the poll. The ballots were discarded after tabulation. 764 youth out of 10,000 took the poll in 1983 and 1246 out of 15,000 in 1986. 1430 out of 17,500 in 1989. These three polls were also hand tabulated and discarded. With the number of

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participants increasing, the 1992 Gathering utilized Jefferson Parish voting machines provided by the Louisiana State Elections Commission for the New Orleans event. 1272 cast their “ballot.” From 1995 through the 2007, paper ballots were scanned electronically like high tests might be. In 2010, the Poll was taken electronically using a Survey Monkey program. 2899 took the poll in 2010. 2432 took the poll in 2013.

## TEENS WHO TOOK THE POLL

Being an event sponsored by The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, the vast majority of participants are LCMS church members, probably in the neighborhood of 98-99%. However, there is no rule that requires one to be a member of the LCMS before you can go to the Gathering and in fact, many churches use the Gathering as a means to reach out to unchurched or marginally churched young people. Also, it should be noted, that adults may take the poll and are separated into adult responses. One can compare the response of youth to issues with the adult response which is often “more correct” than the youth they are responsible for.

The teens come from remarkably stable families. In 1998, the following question was included for the first time on the Poll: “I live with . . .” The options for response were: 1. Both natural parents; 2. Mostly with my mother; 3. Mostly with my father; 4. Equally with mother and father but not together; 5. Non-parental guardian or alternative family setting. (C-17)

On the first Poll with the family question, 70% of youth said “both natural parents.” In 2001, 68% said both, 66% in 2004 and 63% in 2007. In 2010, the response bounced back to 78% and 79% in 2013. Studies of American youth in general indicate that 64% lived in two parent households but as few as 45% live with both natural parents (CNSNEWS.com) The evidence indicates strong and resilient families.

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The teens have indicated positive relationships with their parents since 1983 when 84% said they had an excellent or good relationship with their parents. That response in the 80 percentages has been consistent through the years. (C-18)

In 2001, a question was added: “Do you ever talk to your parents / family about God.” (C-19) The response for a Christian family isn’t that impressive. “Often” was only cited from 26% to 31% of the time. That would suggest a lack of religious conversation. “Sometimes” was the choice for low to mid 40%.

Teens were asked about their relationship with God. (C-3) And there appears to be a troubling trend but which follows a trend in society. “When it comes to God . . .” In 1998 41% said “I feel very close to God.” That number has been on a slow decline, landing at 37% in 2013. At the same time, the response “Sometimes I have questions” went from 45% in 1998 to 55% in 2013.

Another question (uncharted in this summary) asks how many minutes per week is spent in personal Bible study and devotion. There are four options: A. More than two hours; B. 61-120 minutes; C. 15-60 minutes; and D. Very little/almost none. Across the years, in general, “Very little” gets about 35-40% of respondents and 35-40% say 15-60 minutes.

Since 1983, the Poll asked “I rely on God to help me make decisions.” (C-5) Over the year, “always” has ranged from 14-28%. “Sometimes” is the strongest with a range of 66%-80%. The numbers seem to suggest that God is not a part of one’s initial response to a situation or decision.

## SEXUALITY

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Issues around sexuality are certainly a part of the teen world. The Poll began to survey sexuality issues in 1986. The questions revolved around whether being a Christian and believing God's Word – did these make a difference as Lutheran Youth struggled with sexuality. As consideration was given to add questions beginning in 1986, the youth staff considered whether the Poll could ask the kinds of questions that would allow for comparison with the general population. Would critics cry "inappropriate." To assuage such questions, there are responses where Poll takers can opt out or ask for more information.

In a church-body that values virginity up to one's marriage, the first question asked about sexuality was asked on the 1986 Poll: "I believe that pre-marital sexual relationships are . . . " (C-23) The responses were (and are) 1. Always wrong and sinful; 2. Okay if two people love each other; 3. Okay between consenting adults; and 4. Unsure. I need more information. The "correct" answer would be 1, always wrong and obviously out of step with today's trends where. According to Paul Taylor in *The Next America* (Copyright © 2015.), in 1960, 6 in 10 twenty-somethings were married which has morphed to 2 in 10 today. In 1950, 5% of children were born to unmarried mothers which has morphed to 41%. Traditional marriage is on the decline; sexual freedom is everybody's rite in today's culture.

The Poll suggests that LCMS teens continue to support the concept of traditional marriage. 43% said pre-marital sex is 'Always wrong' in 1986. It peaked in 2001 at 67% and declined to 57% in 2013. In 1986, 30% said it was okay if two people loved each other and 3% said it was okay for consenting adults. 23% said they needed more information. While a majority give the right answer, a significant percentage are offering other responses.

Another nuance to this question is whether age makes a difference. Somewhat surprisingly, the older youth have similar attitudes. It doesn't appear that the older the youth, the less inclined to a Biblical response to the question.

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On a second question, though, age does matter. From the 1986 Poll on, a question about being Sexually Active was included (C-28). In 1986, 61% said “They had not engaged in sexual intercourse.” 10% said they had had intercourse but abstain now.” 3% said they engage in intercourse regularly. And, 25% said they preferred not to answer. (A fifth response was added in 2007: “I engage in sexual acts up to but not including intercourse.” This response was noted by 10% in 2013.)

The age of the participant does influence their response. In 2013, when it came to saying “Never engaged,” 85% of 14-year-olds so said, but that number declined dramatically to 44% of 19-year-olds. Many would say it's what happens, normal and nothing to worry about. Still, it appears LCMS youth are trending where society has already gone.

No issue on the Poll demonstrates a trending towards society's mores as does homosexuality and gay marriage. The question was first broached in 1986. (C-25) The question has been asked with the same wording and responses since its first asking: I believe that sexual acts between persons of the same sex (homosexuality) are 1. Always wrong according to God's Word and a sin; 2. It's their business. Nobody has a right to tell them it's a sin; 3. Unsure. I need more information.

In 1986, 82% of Poll takers declared homosexual behavior wrong. That number increased to 84% in 1989. Attitudes began to change in 1992 when 72% responded with answer 1. The response of answer 1 has declined on every poll starting in 1992, coming in at a modest majority in 2013 at 56%.

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It is interesting to consider the difference in response between boys and girls. Boys definitely give the more conservative response. They give “Answer 1” 86% on the 1986 Poll. From that high point, that response steadily declines to 65% on the 2013 Poll.

Girls would appear to be more sensitive (according to society’s standards). They start in 1986 responding at 80% with Answer 1. Over the years, that answer drops to 50%. Looking at the percentage for “Answer 2” can be helpful to see where LCMS youth have come to. “It’s nobody’s business” went from 6% for girls in 1986 up to 39% in 2013. The trending in our society is definitely making itself known among LCMS youth. Finally, it’s helpful to know where the adults are on the issue. They responded 97% in 1989 for Answer 1. That response has declined more slowly to 81% in 2013.

The idea of Same-Sex Marriage became a hot topic in the 1990’s as gay couples sought legal recognition of their relationships. The issue gained momentum across the U.S. Some argued for “civil unions,” some for marriage relationships and some, like the LCMS maintaining the biblical principal that marriage is for one man and one woman. In 2005, six same-sex couples filed suit in Iowa arguing for the right to marry. In 2009, the Iowa Supreme Court declared their right to marry – unanimously. State after state either changed its definition of marriage to include gay couples or the change was mandated by courts. As state after state adopted gay marriage, public opinion became more open to gay marriage . . . and apparently so have the opinions and attitudes of LCMS young people.

2004 was the first time gay marriage appeared on the Youth Poll. “On whether homosexual persons should be allowed to marry,” four answers appear: “1. I’m in favor of gay people being allowed to marry; 2. I’m in favor of civil unions but not marriage; 3. Marriage is for one man and one woman. Nothing else; 4. I don’t know.” (C-26)

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In 2004, 63% of those polled favored Answer 3, “one man/one woman.” That response declined to 57% in 2007, 53% in 2010 and 47% in 2013. An average of 15% “I don’t know” was tallied for the four Polls covered. The first answer in favor of gay marriage has slowly but steadily come to mirror the general societal trend with 11% supporting gay marriage in 2004, 15% in 2007, 19% in 2010 and 25% in 2013.

Group Magazine (June/July/August 2015) reviewed the “Massive Millennial Poll” from Fusion, a popular culture Web site. It bears watching what they found with regard to gender identity. 46% of Fusion respondents said there were only two genders. But, 50% said “two genders don’t adequately describe current conventional wisdom on human diversity.” Male/Female is way too limiting according to the Fusion poll. This is one trend that will be watched closely as nearly any behavior could be claimed as “human diversity.”

Openness to accepting gay marriage is the one issue that is strongly trending with the culture. And, whereas some other church-bodies, including some Lutherans, have chosen to recognize gay marriage as well as homosexual clergy, the LCMS strongly asserts that homosexual behavior is contrary to God’s will and marriage remains an institution for one man and one woman.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

On the role of women in the church, the response from the youth polled has been remarkably consistent. One might assume that young people would be in favor of women as ordained pastors. The matter of ordination of women was a very hot topic in the LCMS in the 1980’s. The LCMS has taken the position that Scripture does not allow for women’s ordination as pastors and in fact, is wrong. The LCMS has chosen to take a Scriptural position over against a societal accommodation.

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In the 80's, the LCMS was one of four church bodies considering a declaration of fellowship and eventual merger. The American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) all had determined that ordination of women as pastors was not a violation of Scripture and an appropriate calling for women. The LCMS totally disagreed and ultimately gave up on any declaration of fellowship for the long term. Merger was also out of the question.

The question, first asked in 1986, on the Youth Poll states: "The LCMS teaches that the ordination of women as pastors is contrary to God's Word. What do you believe?" Four answers are provided: "1. I agree with the LCMS position. It's God's Word; 2. There is a need for more study and discussion. Not sure what God's Word says; 3. The church (LCMS) is wrong. Women should be ordained; and 4. I just don't know." (C-33)

Support for the LCMS position when first asked in 1986, found 23% in favor. Over the ten polls that asked the question, there has been a steady increase in that support to the point that 45% favored the LCMS position in 2010 and 43% in 2013. It's not a majority (yet) but demonstrates a conservative direction. A quarter of respondents generally fell with the needs for more study without taking a position. "The church is wrong" is expressed by only 11% in 2013, down from 17% on the first poll.

One might expect a stronger response for women's ordination. One observation we might make is that the LCMS has historically supported women in ministry. But whereas others define ministry mostly in terms of pastor, the LCMS has a long tradition of naming other "offices," notably the classroom teacher (The LCMS has the largest parochial school system after the Roman Catholics), Deaconess, Director of Christian Education, Director of Outreach, etc. Poll takers generally appear to appreciate this reality.

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## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE: TOBACCO, DRUGS, AND ALCOHOL**

The Youth Polls have always tried to keep track of LCMS teen bad habits when it came to substances abuse. There appears to be both good news and bad news when it comes to tobacco, drugs and alcohol.

On the 1998 Poll, tobacco use was explored for the first time. (C-35) Since that time, the question, “Do you smoke or use tobacco products. 73% said “no” in 1998 and that number has slowly increased over the last 15 years to 92% “No.” Boys smoke more than girls, an average of 87% “no” girls versus 79% for boys. Social smoking has gone down over those years by almost 10%, to 5%.

A question about drug use has appeared on the Poll every triennium since 1986, specifically, “Do you ever use “recreational drugs,” e.g. marijuana, cocaine, crack, etc. 94% said “no” in 2013, a number that has progressively increased from 1985 at 89%. In 1998, the “no” response actually declined to 83%. (C-16)

In 1980 and 1983, the drug question was about legalization of marijuana. 78% said “no” in 1980; 86% said no in 1983. With the societal trend towards legalization, it could be time to resurrect this question.

When it comes to alcohol abuse, there seems to be some very positive news. (C-13; C-15) The “Never” response for the 2013 Poll was 71% to the question, “Do you ever drink beer, wine or hard liquor?” That’s a huge increase over the 1986 “Never” response of 21%. The numbers indicate a 50% increase in teens who don’t drink. The bad news here, however, is the

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percentage of drinkers increase with age. 86% of youth age 14 say they never drink alcohol. That percentage drops to 47% for 19-year-olds.

Seemingly reinforcing the decline in alcohol use, the Poll asked “Have you been drunk one or more times in the last twelve months?” The response was 40% “Yes” in 1986, declining to 15% in 2013, seemingly good news. To compare in the general population, in a study from John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health reports that 44% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders have been drunk in the last twelve months which compares with 26% of Youth Poll 18-year-old responders. That seems to be positive news about church youth, if anything about being drunk can be considered positive.

It appears that church youth, for the most part, make good decisions relative to substance use. While abuse of any substance is cause for alarm, alcohol abuse is particularly a concern. Also, future Polls will want to track trends especially with regards to marijuana use as more states legalize pot for more than medical reasons.

## **SERVICE**

It has been said that Servant Learning is the last value that can be taught in the public schools. And in that spirit, young people have taken up the call to make a difference in the lives of people. Service is very much valued by LCMS teens as a response to the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

There have been critics of the Youth Gathering, denouncing the event as no more than a glorified rock concert and entertainment – hardly worth the time, energy and resources of the church body.

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Since 1998, the Poll has posed the following statement: “I like to help people who have problems or needs.” In the six polls since 1998 an average of 7% said “Almost never.” 53% said “Sometimes.” 27% said “Almost always.” And 12% said “Always.” (C-20) Frankly, those don’t seem like an overwhelming commitment to service.

However, another question tells a different story. Since 2001 the Poll has asked, “Have you been on a Servant Event or Mission trip.” (C-21) An average of 67% of responders said yes. Interestingly, but as one might imagine, the older one is the more likely they are to have gone on a mission trip. In 2013, a “yes” response was offered by 55% of 14-year-olds; 60% of 15’s; 71% of 16’s; 75% of 17’s; 80% of 18’s; and 88% of 19’s. The progression is practically systematic.

What these numbers suggest is a willingness of LCMS young people to serve and help. They are not just invested in “fun and games.” Rather, they are willing to make difference and change people’s lives for the better.

## **CHURCH WORK RECRUITMENT**

Like many Christian denominations, the LCMS is aging. It used to be able to host a thriving approach to youth ministry simply by caring for the young people born into LCMS families and baptized in LCMS church. At the time of the 1980 LCMS Gathering, it is estimated that the synod had an eligible audience of 15-18-year olds of 220,000 young people. Youth Ministry could be largely an internal program. From those 220,000 could be recruited teens interested in pursuing a church career.

These days, the estimated LCMS teen membership is 90-95,000 young people. Obviously, the pool of youth for church careers is going to be smaller. However, despite that reality, there is a

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pool of youth at the Gatherings who seem to be willing to be pursued if someone would just talk to them.

LCMS professional ministers include pastors, parochial day school teachers, directors of Christian education, deaconesses and directors of Christian outreach. The data seems to suggest that adults in the church aren't encouraging teens despite their interest. (C-22) In 1998, 35% of the respondents said they were planning a church career. There were 30,000 teens in Atlanta, GA that year which suggests that there could have been perhaps up to 10,000 teens planning to go into professional ministry or at least thinking about it. That suggests there should not be a shortage of church workers but those teens are not showing up in our Concordia universities and seminaries. Even in 2010, when the response to this question was 6%, that represented 1400 interested in ministry.

The second response is "Yes, I would consider but have made no decision." This response suggests that no one is even planting the seed of possible church work career. A little over 25% over the years marked this answer.

If the LCMS or any denomination is going to survive, serious consideration needs to be given to everybody's responsibility to encourage youth in church work vocation.

### **CHURCH FELLOWSHIP: With whom can we pray, preach and commune?**

The matter of church fellowship has been a matter of contention over the 35 years of the Poll. Beginning in the 80's when major Lutheran church bodies were preparing to merge, the contrast between other Lutheran and LCMS positions on fellowship, women's ordination, ministry made merger and fellowship impossible. Then 9/11 happened and many Christians felt compelled to pray. Together. Tragedies like Sandy Hook, the Boston Marathon, the movie

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massacre in Aurora, CO, the church murders in Charleston, SC, and Fergusson, all raise the matter of who can pray with whom. The Youth Poll response suggests that LCMS youth may be out of sync with the churchbody.

The following question was added to the Poll in 2001: “When it comes to the issue of church fellowship, who can worship with whom, I believe . . .” (C-30) On the five Polls on which this question was included, an average of 18% said, “All religions are pretty alike and people should be free to worship who, what and with whom they want to worship.” That nearly 20% suggest a troubling trend towards universalism and syncretism. 53% said “All Christian denominations should be free to worship at each other’s churches” which is not in keeping with LCMS practice. This responses for many young adults harkens back to “See You at the Poll” days where Christian students in public schools prayed together as well as participation in parachurch groups like Young Life. A third response at 21% for “Lutheran Christians should only worship and commune with other Lutherans.” This answer too can be problematic over doctrinal issues. An average of 7% simply said, “I don’t know.”

## **AND WHAT ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?**

In 2007, a question about the environment and global warming (C-40) was asked for the first time. The response was interesting. 43% said it was a real concern and we needed to take it seriously. 30% responded “I don’t believe it’s a real problem but it bears watching. That’s 73% of respondents willing to think about it. The “cynics” response, “A tree-huggers imagination gone” wild garnered only 13%.

Comparing 2013 to 2010, 78% responded with the “real concern/bears watching” in 2013. It was 66% in 2003. These responses suggest growing support for environment issues.

In 2010 and 2013, participants were asked if they recycled. 59% said “All the time” in 2010

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And 60% said “All the time” In 2013. (C-41)

The strong pro-environment response in 2013 was a surprise. Anecdotally, the adult church doesn’t seem to take up the cause. But on the last question on the poll listing 26 issues and concerns, teens were asked what the top three issues for teens were. (C-42) The “environment” has always been listed in the 26 but never been close to being selected. Suddenly, the environment was the number three concern for teens. So, the question comes to mind then as to how the church takes the environment seriously helps young people be good stewards of God’s world.

## **LIFE ISSUES**

The LCMS has a history and reputation of being strongly pro-life. Three survey questions over the course of the poll have tested teen attitudes toward life issues.

The matter of the death penalty shows up on the news periodically. Lately, it has surfaced as the sentences for the Boston Marathon bomber and Aurora CO shooter have been deliberated. The question, “Do you favor the death penalty?” (C-37) has been asked on every Poll except in 1980, 1992, 1995 and 1998. The “Yes” response in 1983 was 56%, in ’86 went down to 47%, and up to 60% in 1989. When added to the 2001 Poll, 40% said yes and began a decline ending at 35% in 2013. Perhaps most interestingly, there is a fairly high “No Opinion,” averaging 28% over the years.

There seems to also be a gender bias between boys and girls, demonstrated on the 2013 Poll, 49% of boys saying “Yes” compared to 26% of Girls.” 58% of all adults said “Yes”, both male and female.

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In 1995 Poll, a question about euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide (C-38) was added because Dr. Jack Kervorkian was making headlines helping people die. The question asked since 1995 is, “How do you feel about euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide?” The response of participants is a bit puzzling. A strong pro-life position would be expected but the “pro life response” “Doctors should always try to keep patients alive” never garners more than 33% (1995). In 2013, 28% supported this response. “Life support can be withheld especially is previously requested by the ill person” saw a high of 40% in 1995 to 30% in 2013. “At times, death may be induced” has an average of 24%. What the numbers seem to suggest is this is not a teen age issue.

Abortion (C-31), perhaps the highest prolife issue for the last 40 plus years, has been included on all twelve polls in one form or another. In the 70’s and early 80’s, the issue was to work for a pro-life amendment to the United States Constitution to ban abortion. At the first Gathering in 1980, 48% of the LCMS teens responded with their support for an amendment. The issue was again in 1983 a constitutional amendment and 53% supported for such. On the 1983 survey, 51% of girls favored the amendment and 57% of the boys. Those numbers suggest boys were more pro=life than girls.

In 1986 the poll took a different approach and focused on one’s agreement with the church. 62% of participants picked “Yes. Abortion is wrong according to God, and murder.” The right to choose abortion was selected by 16%. 12% had no opinion.

In 1989, the abortion question was refocused on one’s personal position, whether pro-life or pro-choice. “Abortion is wrong. I am prolife” was the response of 58% in 1989. 24% said they were pro=choice. 9% said they needed more information and 8% had no opinion. Boys were more pro- life in ’89 (63% vs. girls at 54%) and ’92 (64% vs girls at 57%) respectively. Starting in ’95, girls identified a more pro-life position.

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What is really interesting and encouraging is the growth in the pro-life column: 60% in '92; 65% in '95; 69% in '98; 76% in '01; 75% in '04; then 71%, 73% and 73% in '07, '10 and '13 respectively. Nearly three-quarters of LCMS teens at the Gathering are pro-life. The Gallup Poll reported in May 2015 that 44% of the general population was pro-life. On the issue of abortion, LCMS teens seem to not be trending with the general population.

## **AND, WHAT ABOUT WORSHIP?**

Worship has been a contentious issue over the last 40 years. There are many well-meaning persons, mostly Baby Boomers, who say that for the church to retain its youth, it must do contemporary, praise band worship.

35 years ago, when the term “contemporary” was applied to worship, it largely meant “new” and “new” meant songs that had been written in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Pass It On” by Kurt Kaiser, was the poster song for “contemporary” worship. To that, liturgical churches began to write “new liturgies” rather than using the “canned” liturgies in the hymnal. The “Chicago Folk Mass” was a major hit in terms of liturgy. While instruments other than an organ or piano were occasionally used in “contemporary” worship services, in the 60’s and 70’s contemporary worship had not evolved into what we have today. These days, “contemporary” means praise band, amplified loudly, almost performance oriented using “praise songs,” which some call “seven-eleven choruses,” meaning 7 syllables sung eleven times.

Worship has been a part of the Youth Poll since 1992. (C-7) And, the questions up until the 2010 Poll were oriented around hymnbooks. Up until 1982, the primary LCMS hymnal was The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) published in 1941. Many considered TLH to be the last word in hymnody. That shows up in the Polls from 1992 to 2001. In 2004, the hymnal question was dropped. A new hymnal was published in 2005 and, according to the 2007 Poll, 49% of LCMS

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congregations were using either the hard copy book or electronic program for worship. At the same time, 23% of youth said, “There’s a new hymnal?”

Style became the measure of worship preference. (C-11) Looking at the responses on the polls, there really isn’t a dominant style. If one is looking for the Poll to say youth want “contemporary” worship, one won’t find it. Traditional worship as a style over six polls gets an average 20%. Contemporary is the preference of 25% over those same polls. That doesn’t look like a huge differential. The largest response at 38% is for what would probably be called “blended.” And perhaps most telling is the “Not sure” response which averages 16%. Teens aren’t clamoring for one style or another. The contemporary banner seems more a Baby Boomer issue.

## **FINALLY, WHAT ARE THE BIG CONCERNS AMONG LUTHERAN YOUTH?**

The last question on the Poll is a list of 26 issues/concerns (C-42). Participants in the Poll are asked to pick the top three concerns that teenagers have. This question is a way for teens to easily identify hot buttons in their world. Over the years, certain concerns regularly surface and things that might be “hot buttons” in a given year hardly show up. For example, for all the press and controversy that attend the issues of homosexuality and gay marriage, those issues have never shown up in the top five. In the 1983 Poll, nuclear war was included on the list of options because of the U.S. challenge to the Soviet Union and so-called “sabre-rattling.” “war” did surface in the top five list but hasn’t appeared again since 1983. Aids surfaced in 1992 and 1995. But, over the 35 years the concerns that surface most have been: Future, college, family, friends, boy-girl relationships, and my faith.

Looking at “my faith,” having appeared on 8 of ten lists, there appears to be a fear that somehow, there is the very real possibility of a young person loosing their faith and they know

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it. There are many studies on the loss of faith in post-high school years. The National Study of Youth and Religion challenges the church and society as it shares the data of youth spirituality. Pew Research has done much work to discover the evidence or lack thereof young adult faith. The fastest growing segment of the population is the “Nones” namely young adults with no spiritual interests. They are and plan to remain unaffiliated.

Teens know a lot about the world and its temptations and in the words of R.E.M., they seem to be aware that “losing my religion” is a very real possibility once they are out of high school. Ironically, perhaps, that fear surfaces on a Poll taken at an event that celebrates and encourages faith and a faith-filled life.

## **SO, IN CONCLUSION . . .**

While every question asked over the last 35 years has not been analyzed, the following summary thoughts beginning on page 23 are offered of what has been learned or is being affirmed from this Polling effort.

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## THINGS THE LYF YOUTH POLL TELLS US OR IMPLIES

---

- Solid families produce solid children who largely reflect the faith and values of their families and church.

Bears out what Christian Smith wrote in *Soul's In Transition* regarding the 6% of **devoted** young adults out of the general population, Millennials who generally believe and practice their faith:

*"Emerging adult religion—whatever its depth, character and substance—correlates significantly with, and we think actually often acts as a causal influence producing, what most consider to be more positive outcomes in life for emerging adults. Whether we focus on relationship with parents, giving and volunteering, participation in organized activities, substance abuse, risky behaviors, moral compassion, physical health, bodily self-image, mental and emotional well-being, locus of control, life satisfaction, life purpose, feeling gratitude, educational achievement, resistant to consumerism, pornography use, or potentially problematic sexual activity, the more religious emerging adults are consistently doing better on these measures than the least emerging adults. (Oxford, Copyright © 2009)*

- Teens know a lot about the world and its temptations and in the words of R.E.M., they seem to be aware that “losing my religion” is a very real possibility once they are out of high school. Ironically, perhaps, that fear surfaces on a Poll taken at an event that celebrates and encourages faith and a faith-filled life.
- Consistent teaching by the church can reap rewards as seen in the strong pro-life response to the abortion question.
  - Teenagers appear to know the right answers whether they “own” them or not.
  - Areas where young people support church doctrine:
    - + Women’s ordination
    - + Pro-Life / Anti-abortion

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- However, it appears that teens will pick and choose their issues. Some “issues” they will totally ignore. Some things just aren’t issues, e.g. euthanasia, homosexuality, etc.
  - Teens will “own” society’s issues, e.g. sudden growth in concern about the environment. But, they probably haven’t heard much about it in church.
  - Today’s teens will likely continue society’s trend towards acceptance of homosexuality, cohabitation, etc.
- Despite their being strongly connected to family and church, God is not necessarily their first source of counsel or support.
- Reporting of spiritual behaviors (e.g. Personal devotion, taking a Bible to school, relying on God, feeling close to God) suggest a modest (if sincere) faith life.
- Recreational drugs aren’t much of an issue; alcohol is a challenge.
- Trends too watch:
  - Legalization of marijuana
  - Acceptance of the gay culture and gay marriage
  - Selective reading of Scripture (and the teen who said, “Despite what the Bible says. . . .)
  - The rise of the Nones and a church relationship based on
    - + Transcendence, not dogma
    - + Tolerance and justice, not judgment
    - + Authenticity, not tradition/history
- Church worker recruitment: Based on the Poll, there should be no shortage of workers to fill pulpits and classrooms.

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**COLLECTED CHARTS FOR**  
**LUTHERAN YOUTH**  
**AND THEIR RESPONSE TO THE SOCIETY THEY LIVE IN**  
**The Lutheran Youth Fellowship Youth Poll, 1980-2013**

By

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**ABSTRACT**

This presentation considers 30 years of survey research. Interesting observations considering youth responses (noting gender differences) and varying ways that data has been collected (hand tabulation, scanned responses, survey monkey) will be shared. (Research Goals: A. The degree to which LCMS youth are in agreement or opposition with LCMS positions; B. The degree to which youth conform to the trends and tendencies of our society and culture, and; C. To identify what issues and concerns are on the hearts and minds of youth.)

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6.	Do you ever take a Bible to school?
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16.	Do you ever take recreational drugs?
17.	I live with . . .
18.	I would describe my relationship with my Parents as . . .
19.	Do you ever talk to your parents/family about God?
20.	I like to help people who have problems and needs
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23.	I believe pre-marital sexual relationships are . . .
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31.	Abortion
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35.	Do you smoke or use tobacco products?
37.	Do you favor the death penalty?
38.	Euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide
40.	Global warming
41.	Do you recycle?
42.	Top 5 issues in a teen's life

## QUESTION: When it comes to God . . .

## PERSONAL

Note:

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I feel very close to God. I know God loves me							41	46	45	42	35	37	
B. Sometimes I have questions. But I feel pretty good about God							45	45	42	46	56	55	
C. Often, I feel distant from God and not sure about Him							7	6	7	7	7	7	
D. I'm not sure there really is a God							2	1	1	2	1	2	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I feel very close to God. I know God loves me							45	47	45	43	36	37	
B. Sometimes I have questions. But I feel pretty good about God							40	43	39	45	56	56	
C. Often, I feel distant from God and not sure about Him							7	5	8	8	7	6	
D. I'm not sure there really is a God							2	2	2	3	1	1	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I feel very close to God. I know God loves me							39	44	45	43	35	37	
B. Sometimes I have questions. But I feel pretty good about God							48	45	44	47	56	54	
C. Often, I feel distant from God and not sure about Him							7	7	6	7	8	8	
D. I'm not sure there really is a God							1	1	1	1	2	1	

# ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I feel very close to God. I know God loves me	63	68	71	73	66	74							
B. Sometimes I have questions. But I feel pretty good about God	29	28	23	23	31	24							
C. Often, I feel distant from God and not sure about Him	3	1	2	2	2	3							
D. I'm not sure there really is a God	0	0	0	0	1	0							

## QUESTION: I rely on God to help me make decisions.

**PERSONAL**

Note: Except for 1980, this question has been asked consistently over the 30+ years of the poll.

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always		28	14	24	19	24	22	27	24	21	22	23	
B. Sometimes		70	80	71	72	68	67	66	67	69	70	70	
C. Rarely		1	5	5	8	7	7	6	7	7	7	6	
D. Never		0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	

### **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always		29	10	20	17	19	20	22	21	18	17	18	
B. Sometimes		69	81	75	72	70	69	69	67	70	72	74	
C. Rarely		2	8	6	10	10	8	8	6	9	10	7	
D. Never		1	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	

### **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always		61	16	28	20	27	24	29	26	23	24	27	
B. Sometimes		35	80	68	73	67	68	66	67	70	70	67	
C. Rarely		4	4	4	7	5	6	5	6	6	5	5	
D. Never		0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	

Girls indicate (1983) a higher reliance on God, almost twice as much as boys.

### **ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always		*	*	*	*	35	34	44	43	43	45	42	
B. Sometimes		*	*	*	*	64	64	56	55	56	53	57	
C. Rarely		*	*	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	
D. Never		*	*	*	*	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	

There was no “adult” response identified in 1983, 86, and 89. And in 1992, the use of voters booth prevented adult responses.

## QUESTION: Do you ever take a Bible to school?

**PERSONAL**

Note: This question has only been asked since 2-001)

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Almost every day	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	19	19	18	17	20	
B. At least once a week	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5	8	6	5	10	
C. Maybe once a month	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	7	8	6	7	7	
D. Rarely, if ever	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	65	58	62	71	63	

### **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Almost every day								22	19	18	17	20	
B. At least once a week								5	8	6	5	10	
C. Maybe once a month								7	8	6	7	7	
D. Rarely, if ever								65	58	62	71	63	

### **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Almost every day								17	17	16	16	21	
B. At least once a week								5	7	6	5	19	
C. Maybe once a month								7	9	7	7	7	
D. Rarely, if ever								67	61	65	72	53	

### **ADULT RESPONSE (Read as “Do you ever take a Bible to work?”)**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Almost every day								20	21	***	30	21	
B. At least once a week								5	7		11	19	
C. Maybe once a month								7	6		9	7	
D. Rarely, if ever								43	33		51	53	

\*\*\* Significant #'s of adults did not answer this question, 20% in 2007

## QUESTION: What kind of worship does your church offer?

## PERSONAL: SPIRITUAL

Note: There are no responses to this or a similar/equivalent question in 2007, 2004, 1989, 1986 or 1980.

### 1992 and 1995.

NOTE; in 1992 and 1995, the official hymn and service book was *Lutheran Worship*. A significant other resource was The Lutheran Hymnal, published in 1941 which LW was to replace and a significant number of congregations refused to give up. The Youth Poll question read "Worship at our church

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Is always our of Lutheran Worship					21	21							
B. Is always out of the Lutheran Hymnal					36	29							
C. Is difference every Sunday, printed in the bulletin					32	33							
D. I don't know					9	15							

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Is always our of Lutheran Worship					23	23							
B. Is always out of the Lutheran Hymnal					39	27							
C. Is difference every Sunday, printed in the bulletin					27	36							
D. I don't know					10	14							

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Is always our of Lutheran Worship					21	21							
B. Is always out of the Lutheran Hymnal					33	31							
C. Is difference every Sunday, printed in the bulletin					37	33							
D. I don't know					8	16							

### ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Is always our of Lutheran Worship						23							
B. Is always out of the Lutheran Hymnal						23							
C. Is difference every Sunday, printed in the bulletin						51							
D. I don't know						2							

## QUESTION: What kind of worship does your church offer?

## PERSONAL: SPIRITUAL

Note: There are no responses to this or a similar/equivalent question in 2007, 2004, 1989, 1986 or 1980.

### 1998 and 2001.

Worship was identified by the hymnbook you used. Lutheran Book of Worship was the hymnal of the ELCA, considered to be the liberal hymnal.

The question was asked as follows: "Worship at our church is . . ."

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Usually out of Lutheran Worship							42	39					
B. Usually out of The Lutheran Hymnal							16	15					
C. Usually out of Lutheran Book of Worship							6	6					
D. Different every Sunday, in the bulletin							21	27					
E. We use a variety of hymnals							10	8					
F. I really don't know							3	3					

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Usually out of Lutheran Worship							41	36					
B. Usually out of The Lutheran Hymnal							17	16					
C. Usually out of Lutheran Book of Worship							5	5					
D. Different every Sunday, in the bulletin							20	28					
E. We use a variety of hymnals							11	9					
F. I really don't know							2	3					

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Usually out of Lutheran Worship							44	44					
B. Usually out of The Lutheran Hymnal							15	15					
C. Usually out of Lutheran Book of Worship							5	5					
D. Different every Sunday, in the bulletin							21	21					
E. We use a variety of hymnals							10	10					
F. I really don't know							3	3					



## ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Usually out of Lutheran Worship							41	34					
B. Usually out of The Lutheran Hymnal							16	15					
C. Usually out of Lutheran Book of Worship							5	7					
D. Different every Sunday, in the bulletin							19	28					
E. We use a variety of hymnals							15	11					
F. I really don't know							0	1					

## 2010 and 2013

Beginning in 2010, the worship question is posed in terms of style. The question was “What kind of worship services does your church have?”

## TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Only traditional											31	33	
B. Only contemporary											4	3	
C. Traditional and contemporary											51	51	
D. Blended services											8	8	
E. You never know what to expect											6	5	

## BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Only traditional											32	31	
B. Only contemporary											4	3	
C. Traditional and contemporary											47	51	
D. Blended services											9	9	
E. You never know what to expect											7	5	

## GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Only traditional											31	34	
B. Only contemporary											4	3	
C. Traditional and contemporary											53	51	
D. Blended services											8	7	
E. You never know what to expect											5	5	

# **ADULT RESPONSE**

	<b>+ 1980 + 1983 + 1986 + 1989 + 1992 + 1995 + 1998 + 2001 + 2004 + 2007 + 2010 + 2013 + 2016</b>											
A. Only traditional											33	35
B. Only contemporary											3	4
C. Traditional and contemporary											51	50
D. Blended services											12	8
E. You never know what to expect											1	3

## QUESTION: What is your preferred worship style

## PERSONAL

Note: The question of style of worship preference first appeared in the poll in 1998. The response options changed a couple times.

### What Kind of worship do you prefer?

#### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. <u>Traditional, liturgical worship pretty</u> <u>Pretty much out of a hymnal</u>							18	19	19	19	22	21	
B. <u>Mixture of old and new, not necessarily</u> <u>Out of a hymnal</u>							41	41	37	42	33	35	
C. <u>Contemporary music w/ praise band.</u> <u>Never out of a hymnal</u>							17	22	25	27	29	27	
D. <u>Not sure. I really like a variety of all</u>							21	16	16	9	16	17	

#### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. <u>Traditional, liturgical worship pretty</u> <u>Pretty much out of a hymnal</u>							23	23	25	25	28	26	
B. <u>Mixture of old and new, not necessarily</u> <u>Out of a hymnal</u>							37	37	33	41	30	33	
C. <u>Contemporary music w/ praise band.</u> <u>Never out of a hymnal</u>							18	24	24	23	26	24	
D. <u>Not sure. I really like a variety of all</u>							20	14	17	10	16	17	

#### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. <u>Traditional, liturgical worship pretty</u> <u>Pretty much out of a hymnal</u>							16	18	17	17	28	18	
B. <u>Mixture of old and new, not necessarily</u> <u>Out of a hymnal</u>							43	43	40	44	35	36	
C. <u>Contemporary music w/ praise band.</u> <u>Never out of a hymnal</u>							17	21	26	29	31	29	
D. <u>Not sure. I really like a variety of all</u>							21	17	16	9	16	7	

# ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. <u>Traditional, liturgical worship pretty pretty much out of a hymnal</u>	18	22	23	19	25	24							
B. <u>Mixture of old and new, not necessarily out of a hymnal</u>	53	57	48	51	45	54							
C. <u>contemporary music w/ praise band.</u> Never out of a hymnal	12	13	15	21	19	15							
D. <u>Not sure. I really like a variety of all</u>	14	7	11	7	11	7							

# **QUESTION: Do you ever drink beer, wine (not including the Lord's Supper) or hard liquor?**

**PERSONAL**

## **TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Never	21	29	35	41	36	40	41	45	66				
B. Maybe a couple times a year	45	43	43	37	37	35	30	30	22				
C. At least once a month	23	19	15	16	16	16	18	13	9				
D. A least once a week	10	8	7	5	8	7	9	9	4				

## **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Never	20	28	34	32	38	41	38	45	67				
B. Maybe a couple times a year	47	43	37	37	32	32	28	30	21				
C. At least once a month	20	21	18	21	16	15	21	12	9				
D. A least once a week	13	9	10	10	11	10	11	11	4				

## **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Never	22	31	35	37	35	40	43	45	65				
B. Maybe a couple times a year	45	44	47	39	40	37	32	31	23				
C. At least once a month	24	18	12	18	17	17	17	14	8				
D. A least once a week	9	8	4	6	6	6	8	8	3				

## **ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Never	10	*	9	10	16	10	12	13					
B. Maybe a couple times a year	36	*	41	38	34	30	34	27					
C. At least once a month	31	*	33	29	24	31	22	29					
D. A least once a week	23	*	17	18	19	26	29	31					

Adults were not surveyed in 1986 or 1992

A question about alcohol use was not asked in the first poll in 1980. The 1983 poll asked the following question:

\* Drinking of alcoholic beverages, including wine and beer, by young people under the legal drinking age:

	Boys	Girls	Total
A. Is always wrong	33	26	28
B. Is OK with the consent of their parents	58	65	62
C. Should be okay whether parents know or not	8	8	8
D. No response	1	2	2

<b>By. Age, answering Never</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Adults</b>
1986		28	20	19	10	**	**
1989		44	33	26	24	20	10
1992 No data collected by age							
1995		46	41	37	37	27	9
1998		44	42	39	31	35	10
2001		52	41	44	37	35	16
2004		61	45	44	34	32	10
2007		59	51	54	45	43	12
2010	76	74	66	64	50	34	13
2013	86	80	68	61	55	47	19

**QUESTION: Have you been drunk one or more times in the last twelve months?**

**PERSONAL**

Note: This was not a question in 1980 or 1983.

**TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes			40	40	36	30	29	29	28	25	20	15	
B. No			60	60	63	69	68	70	70	73	80	85	

**BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes			39	45	35	32	29	30	31	26	20	16	
B. No			61	55	63	68	69	68	67	72	80	84	

**GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes			40	35	36	27	30	28	27	24	20	14	
B. No			60	65	62	73	68	72	72	74	80	86	

**ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes			**	14	**	22	21	41	22	21	25	39	
B. No			**	53	**	78	74	59	76	78	75	61	

# **QUESTION: Do you ever use “recreational drugs,” e.g. marijuana, cocaine, crack, etc?**

**PERSONAL**

Note:

## **TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Never	89	91	91	88	83	87	86	89	90	94			
B. 2-3 times a year, like at a party	7	4	5	7	9	6	7	5	5	4			
C. 1-3 times a month	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2			
D. At least once a week	1	2	0	1	2	2	2	1	2	1			

## **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Never	88	90	90	85	81	84	81	88	88	91			
B. 2-3 times a year, like at a party	9	5	6	9	10	7	5	6	5	4			
C. 1-3 times a month	2	3	3	4	4	2	3	2	3	3			
D. At least once a week	1	2	0	2	3	5	2	2	4	2			

## **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Never	90	92	93	92	85	95	89	90	92	95			
B. 2-3 times a year, like at a party	6	3	4	5	7	2	5	4	4	3			
C. 1-3 times a month	3	3	2	2	3	0	3	2	3	2			
D. At least once a week	1	2	0	1	2	1	2	1	1	1			

## **ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Never	*	97	*	96	91	87	96	95	97	99			
B. 2-3 times a year, like at a party	*	2	*	2	3	7	1	1	2	1			
C. 1-3 times a month	*	0	*	1	1	2	1	1	1	0			
D. At least once a week	*	1	*	1	1	5	1	1	1	0			

**NOTE:** In 1980 and 1983, a national issue was the legalization of marijuana. At the two Gatherings in those years, the Youth Poll questioned LCMS youth as to their attitude to legalization. In 1980, 78% of LCMS youth were opposed. In 1983, 86% were opposed. 7% had not opinion. The question now is a curious one given the movement to legalize marijuana, Colorado and Oregon actually having done it. According to Gallup (July 2015) 62% of adults under 30 favor legalization.



## QUESTION: I live with . . .

Note: Question first asked in 1998

## FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Both my natural parents							70	68	66	63	78	79	
B. Mostly with my mother							11	12	12	11	13	13	
C. Mostly with my father							3	3	3	2	3	3	
D. Equally with my mother and father but not together							2	2	2	2	3	4	
E. With a non-parental guardian or alternative family setting							2	2	2	2	3	2	
F. Not applicable. I'm an adult								13	13	17	*	*	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Both my natural parents							68	67	63	67	79	78	
B. Mostly with my mother							12	12	11	9	11	12	
C. Mostly with my father							4	4	5	2	3	3	
D. Equally with my mother and father but not together							2	2	4	2	4	4	
E. With a non-parental guardian or alternative family setting							2	2	2	1	3	2	
F. Not applicable. I'm an adult								14	15	15	*	*	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Both my natural parents							73	70	67	62	77	79	
B. Mostly with my mother							12	11	12	11	14	13	
C. Mostly with my father							3	3	2	3	3	2	
D. Equally with my mother and father but not together							2	2	2	2	2	4	
E. With a non-parental guardian or alternative family setting							2	2	2	2	2	2	
F. Not applicable. I'm an adult								13	13	19	*	*	

The national average for youth living with both natural parents is 46%. 79% of Gathering youth living with both natural parents is a societal phenomenon. Speaks well for LCMS families and churches. What a blessing this number is for our youth.

# **QUESTION: I would describe my relationship with my parents as . . .**

## **FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS**

Note:

### **TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Excellent. Great Communication	*	37	25	30	30	26	32	33	33	34	31	36	
B. Good. We get along most of the time	*	47	59	49	51	55	46	49	46	47	49	46	
C. Fair. Things could be better	*	14	11	19	16	16	16	14	15	13	16	17	
D. Lousy. There's no hope	*	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	

### **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Excellent. Great Communication		35	26	27	28	24	30	32	32	38	34	39	
B. Good. We get along most of the time		47	61	53	54	59	49	50	48	47	48	43	
C. Fair. Things could be better		14	15	18	15	15	15	14	15	10	16	17	
D. Lousy. There's no hope		4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	

### **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Excellent. Great Communication		36	24	31	31	28	33	34	35	32	30	34	
B. Good. We get along most of the time		47	59	46	49	54	45	49	46	48	50	48	
C. Fair. Things could be better		14	14	18	17	17	16	14	15	15	15	16	
D. Lousy. There's no hope		3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	

**ADULT RESPONSE :** Confusion as to whether adults should answer created inconclusive data

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Excellent. Great Communication													
B. Good. We get along most of the time													
C. Fair. Things could be better													
D. Lousy. There's no hope													

## QUESTION: Do you ever talk with your parents / family about God?

## FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Note: The question was asked for the first time in 2001.

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Often								28	31	29	26	29	
B. Sometimes								49	42	43	46	46	
C. Rarely								18	19	19	21	19	
D. Never								4	6	6	7	6	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Often								28	31	29	24	27	
B. Sometimes								48	40	43	46	49	
C. Rarely								19	20	20	23	19	
D. Never								4	7	7	8	6	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Often								29	31	30	27	31	
B. Sometimes								49	43	43	45	44	
C. Rarely								17	18	19	20	19	
D. Never								4	6	5	7	6	

### ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Often								46	41	41	44	44	
B. Sometimes								43	38	40	40	43	
C. Rarely								5	10	9	11	11	
D. Never								2	3	3	5	1	

## QUESTION: I like to help people who have problems or needs

## VOCATION

Note: Question asked for the first time in 1998.

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Almost never							8	7	8	9	5	5	
B. Sometimes							58	55	57	55	48	47	
C. Almost always							24	27	25	24	29	32	
D. Always							8	10	9	9	18	17	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Almost never							14	12	11	13	9	8	
B. Sometimes							61	56	61	54	52	53	
C. Almost always							18	23	20	27	22	28	
D. Always							5	9	7	10	12	11	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Almost never							5	5	6	7	3	3	
B. Sometimes							57	55	56	54	43	43	
C. Almost always							27	29	27	27	33	33	
D. Always							10	11	10	10	21	20	

### ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Almost never							5	3	5	4	5	0	
B. Sometimes							53	50	52	54	44	39	
C. Almost always							32	31	30	30	33	36	
D. Always							9	16	12	11	18	25	

## QUESTION: Have you been on a Servant Event / Mission Trip?

## VOCATION

This question was first asked in 2001

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes								64	63	68	71	67	
NO								35	34	30	29	33	

### BOYS RESPONSE

Yes								63	65	68	73	71	
NO								35	31	30	27	29	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

Yes								65	64	69	69	66	
NO								35	35	29	31	34	

### ADULT RESPONSE

Yes								68	72	71	76	85	
NO								30	27	27	24	15	

Fairly consistent commitment to service. Gathering participants aren't just about the big show.

<u>By Age, answering yes</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>Adults</u>
2001	55	63	71	67	71	68
2004	59	59	64	71	71	63
2007	59	66	71	79	75	71
2010	67	73	76	76	81	76
2013	60	71	75	80	88	85

**QUESTION: Would you consider a career in professional church work, e.g. pastor, DCE, teacher, deaconess, etc.**

**VOCATION**

**TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes. I am planning a church career							35	12	11	11	6	7	
B. Yes, I would consider but no decision							*	31	28	25	27	27	
C. No, I'm really not interested							34	34	35	40	40	39	
D. I never really thought about it							26	20	21	19	27	28	

- Only three responses were provided in 1998

**BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes. I am planning a church career							41	15	15	12	8	7	
B. Yes, I would consider but no decision							*	36	27	26	29	28	
C. No, I'm really not interested							32	34	35	40	41	43	
D. I never really thought about it							22	11	16	19	23	22	

**GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes. I am planning a church career							34	10	9	10	6	5	
B. Yes, I would consider but no decision							*	30	32	24	26	26	
C. No, I'm really not interested							35	34	36	41	39	37	
D. I never really thought about it							27	24	23	20	30	32	

**ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes. I am planning a church career							47	22	25	24	31	29	
B. Yes, I would consider but no decision							*	22	22	23	24	28	
C. No, I'm really not interested							23	25	24	25	27	29	
D. I never really thought about it							16	15	17	17	18	14	

## QUESTION: I believe that pre-marital sexual relationships are

## SEXUALITY

Note: This question about sexual relationships was not asked until the 1983 Gathering

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always wrong and sinful	*	*	43	48	48	54	61	67	63	58	53	57	
B. Okay if two people love each others	*	*	30	29	32	25	18	16	17	18	21	17	
C. Okay between consenting persons	*	*	3	3	2	3	11	10	9	12	15	16	
D. Unsure. I need more information	*	*	23	21	17	17	7	7	9	9	12	10	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always wrong and sinful	*	*	36	45	46	57	61	66	59	59	52	57	
B. Okay if two people love each others	*	*	35	28	32	23	18	15	17	17	21	16	
C. Okay between consenting persons	*	*	3	3	2	5	9	9	12	13	15	17	
D. Unsure. I need more information	*	*	25	24	18	15	10	9	10	9	13	10	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always wrong and sinful	*	*	47	51	49	59	62	67	66	59	54	57	
B. Okay if two people love each others	*	*	28	29	32	23	18	16	17	19	21	18	
C. Okay between consenting persons	*	*	3	2	2	2	13	10	8	11	15	15	
D. Unsure. I need more information	*	*	22	18	17	16	6	7	8	9	11	11	

### ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always wrong and sinful	*	*	*	85	*	78	75	80	82	76	77	79	
B. Okay if two people love each others	*	*	*	9	*	14	14	12	7	11	13	14	
C. Okay between consenting persons	*	*	*	1	*	2	4	2	2	3	5	4	
D. Unsure. I need more information	*	*	*	6	*	6	5	4	5	4	5	3	

Note: No adult responses were collected in 1992 when voting machines were used to gather data. No adult data was gathered in 1986

By Age, “Always wrong and sinful”	14	15	16	17	18	19	Adults
1986		40	42	44	53	**	*
1989		47	44	37	46	50	87
1992 No data collected by age group							
1995		58	54	51	49	63	78
1998		61	59	61	54	64	75
2001		66	61	67	68	68	80

<b>By Age, “Always wrong and sinful”</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Adults</b>
2004		64	59	57	60	66	82
2007		54	52	58	58	58	76
2010	58	53	51	51	53	54	77
2013	59	60	55	54	53	56	79



# **QUESTION: I believe that sexual acts between persons of the same sex (homosexuality) are . . .**

## **SEXUALITY**

Note:

### **TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always wrong according to God's Word and a sin	*	*	82	84	72	73	76	71	71	66	60	56.	
B. It's their business. Nobody has a right to tell them it's a sin	*	*	5	6	12	19	16	20	18	23	31	34	
C. Unsure. I need more information	*	*	13	10	14	8	6	9	9	9	10	10	

Note: Question was not asked in 1980 or 1983  
Attitudes begin to change in 1992

### **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always wrong according to God's Word and a sin	*	*	86	88	75	84	84	76	76	76	70	65	
B. It's their business. Nobody has a right to tell them it's a sin	*	*	5	5	10	11	10	15	13	16	22	28	
C. Unsure. I need more information	*	*	9	7	14	5	5	8	10	7	9	8	

### **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always wrong according to God's Word and a sin	*	*	80	81	70	72	73	68	69	63	54	50	.
B. It's their business. Nobody has a right to tell them it's a sin	*	*	6	6	15	20	20	22	21	27	36	39	
C. Unsure. I need more information	*	*	15	13	15	8	6	9	9	10	10	11	

### **ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Always wrong according to God's Word and a sin	*	*	*	97	*	88	91	86	88	86	81	81	
B. It's their business. Nobody has a right to tell them it's a sin	*	*	*	1	*	10	4	9	6	7	13	8	
C. Unsure. I need more information	*	*	*	2	*	3	4	0	5	4	6	11	

## QUESTION: On the issue of whether homosexual persons should be allowed to marry

## SEXUALITY

Note: This question was first asked at the 2004 Gathering

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I'm in favor of gay people being allowed to marry									11	15	19	25	
B. I'm in favor of civil unions but not marriage									12	12	12	12	
C. Marriage is for one man and one woman; Nothing else									63	57	53	47	
D. I don't know									12	13	17	17	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I'm in favor of gay people being allowed to marry									9	9	12	18	
B. I'm in favor of civil unions but not marriage									12	10	11	12	
C. Marriage is for one man and one woman; Nothing else									69	67	62	55	
D. I don't know									8	12	15	16	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I'm in favor of gay people being allowed to marry									12	17	22	29	
B. I'm in favor of civil unions but not marriage									12	13	12	11	
C. Marriage is for one man and one woman; Nothing else									61	53	48	42	
D. I don't know									13	15	18	17	

# ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I'm in favor of gay people being allowed to marry	2	3	6	8									
B. I'm in favor of civil unions but not marriage	8	8	11	15									
C. Marriage is for one man and one woman; Nothing else	84	78	75	58									
D. I don't know	5	5	8	15									

# **QUESTION: Statistics indicate that teens are “sexually active.” How would you describe yourself?**

## **SEXUALITY**

Note: From 1986—2004 there were four responses provided: 1. I’ve never had intercourse; 2. I’ve had intercourse but abstain; 3. Regularly engage in intercourse, 4. Prefer not to answer.

### **TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I’ve never engaged in sexual intercourse	61	62	73	73	66	69	65	55	67	72			
B. I’ve had intercourse but abstain now	10	11	9	10	10	10	9	7	5	6			
C. I engage in sexual acts up to but not including intercourse	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	9	10	10			
D. I regularly engage in intercourse	3	5	9	8	6	8	7	8	6	4			
E. I’d prefer not to answer	25	23	7	9	9	9	11	13	13	10			

### **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I’ve never engaged in sexual intercourse	49	58	68	60	65	69	61	55	65	69			
B. I’ve had intercourse but abstain now	12	11	10	11	10	9	17	7	5	6			
C. I engage in sexual acts up to but not including intercourse	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10	12	12			
D. I regularly engage in intercourse	4	4	12	15	7	9	9	7	5	4			
E. I’d prefer not to answer	35	27	8	14	10	9	12	14	12	20			

### **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I’ve never engaged in sexual intercourse	67	65	77	69	68	70	67	55	68	73			
B. I’ve had intercourse but abstain now	9	10	9	11	11	10	8	7	5	6			
C. I engage in sexual acts up to but not including intercourse	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8	8	8			
D. I regularly engage in intercourse	3	7	7	10	6	8	7	9	6	4			
E. I’d prefer not to answer	20	18	6	11	9	8	11	13	13	10			

### **ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I’ve never engaged in sexual intercourse	*	22	*	22	14	23	20	13	14	25			
B. I’ve had intercourse but abstain now	*	14	*	16	11	11	7	5	6	3			
C. I engage in sexual acts up to but not including intercourse	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2	4	7			
D. I regularly engage in intercourse	*	29	*	31	10	15	11	16	20	21			
E. I’d prefer not to answer	*	34	*	31	18	23	24	32	56	44			

## QUESTION: Regarding being Sexually Active

## SEXUALITY

### By Age, answering "I've never engaged in intercourse"

	14	15	16	17	18	19	Adults
1986	*	65	58	62	58	*	*
1989	*	71	63	54	42	63	24
1992	Data was not collected by age due to using voting machines for casting answers						
1995	*	81	75	68	61	61	22
1998	*	81	75	70	70	69	14
2001	*	84	78	71	71	60	23
2004	*	83	73	70	61	61	20
2007	*	77	67	59	52	48	13
2010	81	77	67	59	54	42	14
2013	85	80	70	61	55	44	25

### Notes:

- Consistency of about two thirds being virgins and never had intercourse.
- Numbers suggest what could be obvious, that the older a teen gets the more likely they are to engaged in intercourse. Societal norms seemed to accept the fact of sexuality teens. When looking at the numbers for 2007, 2010 and 2013 for 18 and 19-year-olds

CONSIDER notes about abstinence and preference to not answer

This question was not asked in 1980 nor 1983. However, in 1983, the issue of telling parents when their children obtained contraceptives was polled. Organizations like Planned Parenthood were proposing that their children had a right to privacy and that parents did not have a right for the information. Follows here what LCMS teens thought about the issue:

Parents should be told when their teenagers get contraceptives:	Girls	Boys	Total
Yes	32%	35%	33%
No	41%	42%	41%
No Opinion	27%	22%	25%
No Response	1%	2%	1%

The data suggests that LCMS kids tended toward their right to privacy.

## **QUESTION: When it comes to the issue of “church fellowship” and who can worship with whom, I believe . . . ISSUES**

Note: The first Youth Poll in 1980 queried whether LCMS teens supported “fellowship” in protest with the then American Lutheran Church. This was the first poll on any fellowship issue and the last until - - - -. The response was 25% supporting “fellowship in protest.” 8% would support abandoning fellowship entirely. Interestingly, as big an issue as fellowship was in the “adult church,” 44% of the youth polled said they needed for information.

The question of fellowship was not raised again until 2001 after interfaith services were often the response to national tragedies, e.g. 9/11, Sandy Hook, Ferguson, Charlotte, etc. Could/should LCMS pastors and members participate in such public expressions and their implications of a universal spirituality.

### **TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. All religions are pretty much alike and people should be free to worship who, what and with whom They want to worship	15	17	18	20	21								
B. All Christian denominations should be free to worship at each others churches	55	51	52	54	52								
C. Lutheran Christians should only worship and commune with other Lutherans	21	23	21	20	20								
D. I don’t know. What is church fellowship?” I need more information	6	8	7	7	7								

### **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. All religions are pretty much alike and people should be free to worship who, what and with whom They want to worship	13	16	16	19	20								
B. All Christian denominations should be free to worship at each others churches	52	49	49	51	54								
C. Lutheran Christians should only worship and commune with other Lutherans	25	25	26	22	20								
D. I don’t know. What is church fellowship?” I need more information	6	8	7	8	6								

### **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. All religions are pretty much alike and people should be free to worship who, what and with whom They want to worship	15	17	18	20	22								
B. All Christian denominations should be free to worship at each others churches	57	51	55	56	51								
C. Lutheran Christians should only worship and commune with other Lutherans	19	22	19	18	20								
D. I don’t know. What is church fellowship?” I need more information	7	8	6	6	8								

### **ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. All religions are pretty much alike and people should be free to worship who, what and with whom They want to worship	4	8	5	8	7								
B. All Christian denominations should be free to worship at each others churches	54	49	52	48	57								
C. Lutheran Christians should only worship and commune with other Lutherans	34	36	35	41	35								
D. I don’t know. What is church fellowship?” I need more information	2	4	3	3	1								

## QUESTION: ABORTION

## ISSUES

Note: Abortion has been included on all twelve Youth Polls. The question has been posed in several wordings, the most recent and most used wording asks whether the taker is Pro-Life or Pro-Choice

On the first poll in 1980, the conversation in political and religious circles was around a constitutional amendment to declare abortion banned. 48% of poll takers favored a pro-life amendment to the constitution representing 44% of girls and 49% of boys

On the 1983 poll, also about a constitutional amendment 53.4% favored an amendment representing 51% of girls and 57% of boys. Boys appear to be more pro-life than the girls.

The 1986 poll took a different approach, focusing on the church’s position on abortion. Opposition to abortion focused less on a constitutional amendment and more on what individuals and institutions could do to protest abortion. The question and responses in 1986, focusing on the LCMS pro-life position, were:

- Do you agree with your church’s strong opposition to abortion.

	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS
A. Yes, abortion is wrong according to God. Murder	62%	58%	65%
B. No. A woman should have the right to choose	16%	17%	16%
C. I really need more information	9%	9%	9%
D. No opinion	12%	15%	11%

The 1989 Poll moved to focus on an individuals position on abortion. The question was written as follows:

\* How would you describe your position on abortion?

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Abortion is wrong. I am pro-life	58	60	65	69	76	75	71	73	73				
B. A woman should have the right to choose. I am pro-choice.	24	27	20	15	13	13	18	18	18				
C. I really need more information	9	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5				
D. No opinion	8	5	7	7	*	*	*	*	*				
In 2001, option D became “It’s not an issue I care very much about and have no opinion							4	3	3	4	4		

Note how the pro-life position increases from 58% in 1989 to and high of 76% in 2001 and 73% in 2010 and 2013. The national percentage being pro-life, according to Gallup, is 46%.

Note the change in response “D”. It is sad that, as small as the response starting in 2001 is, that 3-4% simply don’t care about the issue.

### **BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Abortion is wrong. I am pro-life	63	64	67	68	73	73	70	71	72				
B. A woman should have the right to choose. I am pro-choice.	20	21	18	13	12	13	16	19	17				
C. I really need more information	9	9	6	7	7	8	6	6	5				
D. No opinion	8	6	10	9	*	*	*	*	*				
In 2001, option D became “It’s not an issue I care very much about and have no opinion							7	4	5	6	6		

### **GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Abortion is wrong. I am pro-life	54	57	68	71	78	78	72	74	75				
B. A woman should have the right to choose. I am pro-choice.	27	32	22	15	13	13	19	17	18				
C. I really need more information	10	5	6	6	6	6	5	5	5				
D. No opinion	8	4	5	6	*	*	*	*	*				
In 2001, option D became “It’s not an issue I care very much about and have no opinion							3	2	2	3	2		

Observation: Girls, in 1989 were significantly more pro-choice than boys and almost 30% more than adults.

### **ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Abortion is wrong. I am pro-life	82	*	73	69	81	82	81	79	88				
B. A woman should have the right to choose. I am pro-choice.	47	*	20	15	12	13	12	15	4				
C. I really need more information	5	*	4	4	2	3	4	5	4				
D. No opinion	2	*	3	7	*	*	*	*	*				
In 2001, option D became “It’s not an issue I care very much about and have no opinion							2	2	1	2	4		

Note: High level of adult support for a Pro-Life position on abortion. It would seemingly support the LCMS pro-life profile as do the relatively high numbers in the youth response.



**QUESTION: The LCMS teaches that ordination of women as pastors is contrary to God's Word.  
What do you believe?**

**ISSUES**

Note:

**TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I agree with the LCMS position. It's God's Word	*	*	23	32	33	37	43	40	41	44	45	43	
B. There is a need for more study and Discussion. Not sure what God's Word Says.	*	*	37	35	31	25	25	29	26	25	23	24	
C. The church is wrong. Women should be ordained.	*	*	17	15	20	16	11	12	14	12	12	11	
D. I just don't know	*	*	22	18	15	22	18	18	17	17	20	22	

**BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I agree with the LCMS position. It's God's Word			25	35	39	43	51	45	47	52	50	48	
B. There is a need for more study and Discussion. Not sure what God's Word Says.			35	33	27	20	22	21	23	21	22	24	
C. The church is wrong. Women should be ordained.			16	13	17	15	9	12	14	10	8	8	
D. I just don't know			24	20	14	22	17	14	14	15	20	20	

**GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I agree with the LCMS position. It's God's Word			22	30	28	35	40	38	38	40	43	40	
B. There is a need for more study and Discussion. Not sure what God's Word Says.			38	37	34	27	28	29	27	28	24	24	
C. The church is wrong. Women should be ordained.			18	17	21	16	13	11	14	13	14	13	
D. I just don't know			21	17	16	22	18	20	19	17	20	24	

## ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. I agree with the LCMS position. It's God's Word	52	**	51	50	50	52	56	63	63				
B. There is a need for more study and Discussion. Not sure what God's Word Says.	34	**	30	32	27	30	26	24	18				
C. The church is wrong. Women should be ordained.	9	**	13	10	3	11	8	6	4				
D. I just don't know	5	**	5	6	7	7	7	8	8				

In 1983, the question was asked like this: **I am in favor of ordaining women as pastors.**

Response	Total	Boys	Girls
A. Yes	48	43	61
B. No	36	42	36
C. No Opinion	16	14	17
D. No Response	1	1	1

In 1980 there was no division by male or female. The question was the same as 1983. The response was

- Yea 28%
- No 39%
- No Opinion 21%
- No Response 12%

## QUESTION: Do you smoke or use tobacco products

## ISSUES

Note:

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes							10	7	7	5	4	3	
Socially at parties with friends							14	10	9	8	7	5	
No							73	82	83	83	89	92	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes							12	10	10	8	6	5	
Socially at parties with friends							14	12	2	11	9	6	
No							72	76	76	77	86	88	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes							9	5	5	4	3	2	
Socially at parties with friends							13	8	8	6	6	4	
No							78	86	86	87	91	94	

### ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes							8	7	6	6	7	7	
Socially at parties with friends							5	3	6	4	5	8	
No							83	88	87	85	89	81	

No question on smoking was asked at the first Gathering in 1980, In the early 80's the movement to ban smoking in public places was gaining steam and the Youth Poll asked the question asked on many public opinion polls, namely, "Should smoking in public places be illegal?" This question was asked in the Poll in 1983, 1986, 1989, 1992, and 1995. On the 1983 Poll, there were four options for answers, the fourth being "No response."

### **1983 QUESTION: The smoking of tobacco products in public places should be illegal.**

	TOTAL	BOYS	GIRLS
Yes	48	45	50
No	38	42	35
No Opinion	13	12	14
No Response	1	1	1

In 1986, the response options were reduced to three.

**QUESTION: Should smoking in public places be illegal?**

**TOTAL RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes			54	64	62	60							
No			30	24	25	24							
Don't know / No Opinion			16	14	11	15							

**BOYS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes			53	66	63	56							
No			34	23	28	30							
Don't know / No Opinion			12	11	8	14							

**GIRLS RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes			54	62	61	64							
No			29	24	22	22							
Don't know / No Opinion			18	14	14	14							

**ADULT RESPONSE**

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
Yes			*	74	*	66							
No			*	21	*	24							
Don't know / No Opinion			*	6	(	10							

No adults responses recorded in 1986.

## QUESTION: Do you favor the death penalty

## ISSUES

Note: This question was not included on the poll in 1980, 1992, 1995 and 1998

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes		56	47	60	**	**	**	40	43	44	38	35	
B. No		27	19	13	**	**	**	29	28	30	29	31	
C. No Opinion		16	33	27	**	**	**	30	27	24	33	35	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes		69	60	69	**	**	**	52	54	58	54	49	
B. No		20	20	12	**	**	**	26	24	22	21	24	
C. No Opinion		10	20	20	**	**	**	20	20	18	25	27	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes		48	41	51	**	**	**	34	39	38	29	26	
B. No		31	19	15	**	**	**	31	30	33	34	35	
C. No Opinion		20	40	34	**	**	**	35	30	27	37	39	

### ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Yes		**	**	70	**	**	**	54	67	63	63	58	
B. No		**	**	13	**	**	**	25	18	22	19	21	
C. No Opinion		**	**	17	**	**	**	19	15	13	18	21	

NOTE: The Question in 1983 included a no response notation which accounted for 1% of the total, 1% of boys and 1% of girls

NOTE: The Boys and Adults responses are strongly pro-death penalty.

## QUESTION: How do you feel about euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide?

## ISSUES

Note:

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Doctors should always try to keep patients alive						33	30	32	40	31	28	28	
B. Life support can be withheld especially if previously requested by the ill person						40	44	48	38	34	30	30	
C. At times, death may be induced, e.g. a person dying from a fatal illness.						25	17	49	20	17	19	19	
D. I don't know										14	22	24	

Note: The fourth response option was not included until the 2007 Poll. The first time the issue was raised was in 1995.

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Doctors should always try to keep patients alive						40	41	32	42	36	31	31	
B. Life support can be withheld especially if previously requested by the ill person						37	40	43	35	30	31	31	
C. At times, death may be induced, e.g. a person dying from a fatal illness.						24	16	22	20	18	21	19	
D. I don't know										12	17	19	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Doctors should always try to keep patients alive						31	33	32	39	29	27	26	
B. Life support can be withheld especially if previously requested by the ill person						43	47	50	39	36	30	29	
C. At times, death may be induced, e.g. a person dying from a fatal illness.						26	18	17	20	17	19	19	
D. I don't know										16	25	26	

# ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. Doctors should always try to keep patients alive	20	25	11	23	16	16	17						
B. Life support can be withheld especially if previously requested by the ill person	66	63	77	65	65	62	64						
C. At times, death may be induced, e.g. a person dying from a fatal illness.	14	9	9	10	9	12	13						
D. I don't know	**	**	**	**	8	10	7						

## QUESTION: Global warming is . . .

## ISSUES

Note:

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. A real concern we must take seriously										43	31	37	
B. A "tree huggers" imagination gone wild/ It's not a real problem										13	23	22	
C. I don't believe it's a real problem But it bears watching										30	35	41	
D. I have no idea. I need more information										12	12	19	

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. A real concern we must take seriously										35	24	27	
B. A "tree huggers" imagination gone wild/ It's not a real problem										22	32	25	
C. I don't believe it's a real problem But it bears watching										33	36	38	
D. I have no idea. I need more information										8	8	10	

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. A real concern we must take seriously										47	34	34	
B. A "tree huggers" imagination gone wild/ It's not a real problem										8	17	14	
C. I don't believe it's a real problem But it bears watching										29	34	32	
D. I have no idea. I need more information										15	15	20	

### ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
A. A real concern we must take seriously										47	37	29	
B. A "tree huggers" imagination gone wild/ It's not a real problem										10	13	19	
C. I don't believe it's a real problem But it bears watching										32	43	44	
D. I have no idea. I need more information										9	8	7	



## QUESTION: Do you and your family recycle

## ISSUES

Note:

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1980 + 1983 + 1986 + 1989 + 1992 + 1995 + 1998 + 2001 + 2004 + 2007 + 2010 + 2013 + 2016											
A. Yes. All the time.											58	60
B. Sometimes but it's not a habit											31	28
C. No. We just don't											11	12

### BOYS RESPONSE

	+ 1980 + 1983 + 1986 + 1989 + 1992 + 1995 + 1998 + 2001 + 2004 + 2007 + 2010 + 2013 + 2016											
A. Yes. All the time.											58	61
B. Sometimes but it's not a habit											30	28
C. No. We just don't											13	11

### GIRLS RESPONSE

	+ 1980 + 1983 + 1986 + 1989 + 1992 + 1995 + 1998 + 2001 + 2004 + 2007 + 2010 + 2013 + 2016											
A. Yes. All the time.											58	59
B. Sometimes but it's not a habit											32	29
C. No. We just don't											10	12

### ADULT RESPONSE

	+ 1980 + 1983 + 1986 + 1989 + 1992 + 1995 + 1998 + 2001 + 2004 + 2007 + 2010 + 2013 + 2016											
A. Yes. All the time.											61	65
B. Sometimes but it's not a habit											34	25
C. No. We just don't											5	10

## QUESTION: The top 5 issues in a teenagers life and world . . .

## ISSUES

Note: Participants were asked for three concerns; the top five were reported out.

### TOTAL RESPONSE

	+ 1983	+ 1983	+ 1986	+ 1989	+ 1992	+ 1995	+ 1998	+ 2001	+ 2004	+ 2007	+ 2010	+ 2013	+ 2016
	Girls	Boys											
Abortion											17		
Aids					24	17							
Alcohol abuse		22											
Boy-girl relationships	21	27											
Cancer	23												
College						26	21	22	20	23	31	29	
Cults and non-Christian religions													
Drug abuse		22											
Eating disorders													
Environmental concerns												27	
Family Relationships							21	25	23	23		23	
Friends	21	14		33		26	19	22	19		24	33	
Future	17			50	36	38	27	25	22	24	29		
Getting good grades													
Getting a good job		11											
Homosexuality													
Money													
My death													
My faith					19	27	25	33	30	28	29	25	
Physical/Sexual abuse													
Prejudice and racism					21								
Sex					18								
Terrorism													
Unionism													
War	24	27											
World hunger													
Unbelievers											16		

The 1989 Poll published an incomplete list of only 14 options. Missing from the list were items like sex, homosexuality, boy/girl relationships, drugs, alcohol, faith, and family. The 1986 Poll did not include a similar question.

A similar question was asked in 1983. The response was provides between girls and boys. There was no such question on the first Poll in 1980. The inclusion of "war" as one of the top five recalls the years of Ronald Reagan's presidency and his challenge to the Soviet Union to tear down the Berlin wall. The Day After was an ABC movie aired in 1983 in which a nuclear bomb took our Kansas City, reflecting the fears of that time.

80's and African drough relief.

## QUESTION:

Note:

## VOCATION

### TOTAL RESPONSE

+ 1980 + 1983 + 1986 + 1989 + 1992 + 1995 + 1998 + 2001 + 2004 + 2007 + 2010 + 2013 + 2016

### BOYS RESPONSE

### GIRLS RESPONSE

### ADULT RESPONSE

Fairly consistent commitment to service. Gathering participants aren’t just about the big show

<u>By Age, answering yes</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>Adults</u>
2001						
2004						
2007						
2010						
2013						

14-year-olds were admitted to the Gathering in 2010. 59% responded yes to going on a servant event or mission trip. In 2013 55% of 14-year-olds said “yes.”

Heading: Vocation

VOCATION      SEXUALITY      PERSONAL      FAMILY/RELATIONSHIPS      ISSUES      SPIRITUAL/RELIGION

