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# U.S. Protestants Are Not Defined by Reformation-Era Controversies 500 Years Later

*Only about half say faith alone is enough to get into heaven, Bible provides all guidance Christians need*

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While the analysis for this report was guided by our consultation with the advisers, Pew Research Center is solely responsible for the interpretation and reporting of the data.

# U.S. Protestants Are Not Defined by Reformation-Era Controversies 500 Years Later

*Only about half say faith alone is enough to get into heaven, Bible provides all guidance Christians need*

Five hundred years after the start of the Protestant Reformation, a new Pew Research Center survey finds that U.S. Protestants are not united about – and in some cases, are not even aware of – some of the controversies that were central to the historical schism between Protestantism and Catholicism.

Indeed, half a millennium after fundamental disagreements over the means of salvation and the authority of the Bible (among other topics) sparked a series of bloody wars between Protestants and Catholics in Europe, most American Protestants now say the two Christian traditions are more similar than different, religiously, and many U.S. Protestants espouse traditionally Catholic beliefs on some issues.

For example, nearly half of U.S. Protestants today (46%) say faith alone is needed to attain salvation (a belief held by Protestant reformers in the 16th century, known in Latin as *sola fide*). But about half (52%) say both good deeds and faith are needed to get into heaven, a historically Catholic belief.

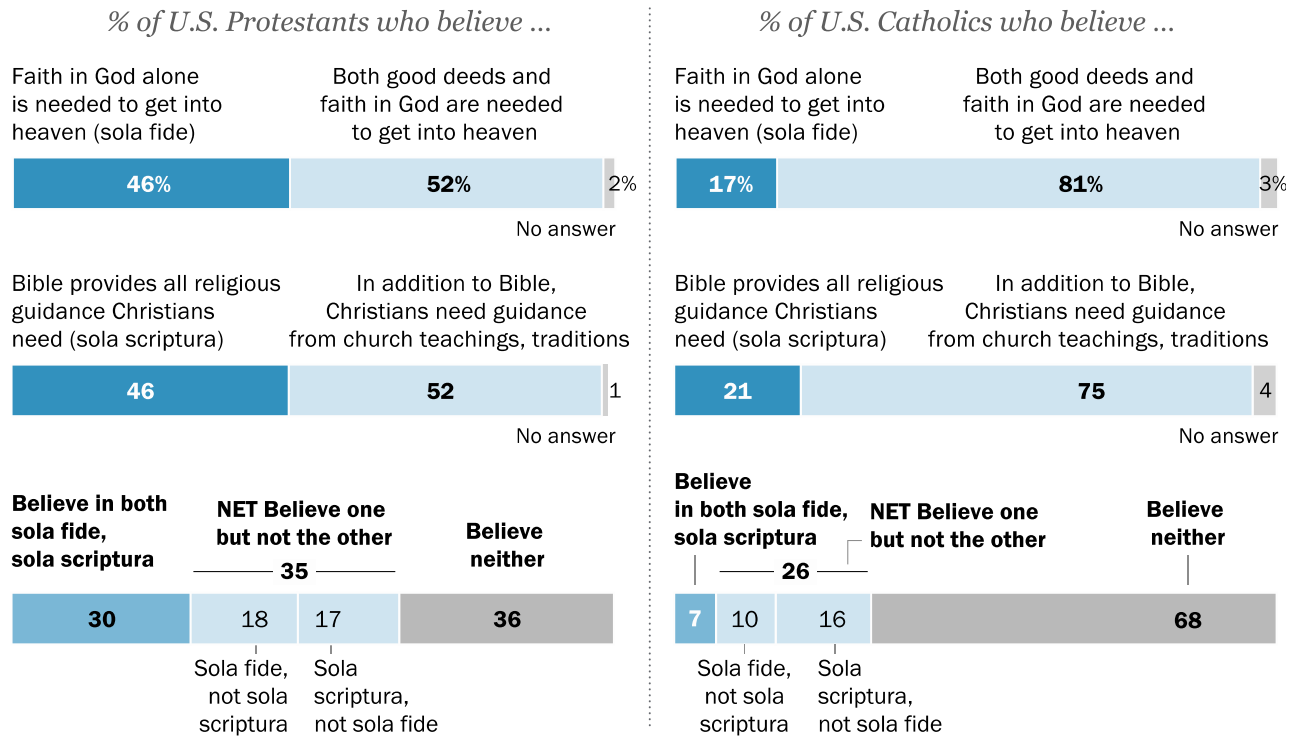
U.S. Protestants also are split on another issue that played a key role in the Reformation: 46% say the Bible is the sole source of religious authority for Christians – a traditionally Protestant belief known as *sola scriptura*. Meanwhile, 52% say Christians should look both to the Bible and to the church's official teachings and tradition for guidance, the position held by the Catholic Church during the time of the Reformation and today.

When these two questions are combined, the survey shows that just three-in-ten U.S. Protestants believe in both *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*. One third of Protestants (35%) affirm one but not the other, and 36% do not believe in either *sola fide* or *sola scriptura*.

While Protestants are divided on how salvation is attained and whether the Bible is the sole source to which Christians should look for religious guidance, U.S. Catholics mostly align with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Fully eight-in-ten U.S. Catholics say both good deeds and faith are needed to get into heaven. And three-quarters say that in addition to the Bible, Christians need

guidance from church teachings and tradition. Overall, two-thirds of Catholics take the traditional positions of the church on *both* of these issues.

**U.S. Protestants split on *sola fide*, *sola scriptura*; in issues connected to Reformation, U.S. Catholics mostly echo traditional church views**



Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Analysis of share who believe in both based on those who answered both questions.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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The 500th anniversary of the Reformation is being commemorated in 2017 largely because Oct. 31, 1517, is the date on which Martin Luther legendarily nailed his 95 theses to the door of All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany. Some scholars now doubt that Luther actually nailed his long list of theological propositions to the church door, and the notion that the Reformation began on a particular day – or even in a single year – is an obvious oversimplification. Many historians argue that the Reformation is best understood as a series of events with roots that precede Luther and which continued into the 17th century, long after his death in 1546.

Furthermore, the issues at the heart of the Reformation were not merely doctrinal. Disputes also arose over religious practices, ecclesiastical structures, the sale of indulgences, the expensive construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and more. Political and other factors also played an important role. But *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, the convictions that faith alone leads to salvation in heaven and that the Bible is the sole source of legitimate authority for Christian believers, became the rallying cry for many Protestant reformers. As Yale University Professor Carlos M.N. Eire has written: "The two principles alone do not explain the whole of Luther's theology, but it is impossible to understand Luther and the whole Protestant Reformation without them."<sup>1</sup>

The survey finds that belief in *sola fide* and *sola scriptura* is much more prevalent among white evangelical Protestants in the U.S. than among white mainline Protestants or black Protestants. Indeed, fully two-thirds of white evangelicals say they believe faith alone is the key to eternal salvation, and nearly six-in-ten say the Bible is the only source to which Christians should look for religious guidance. Even among white evangelicals, however, just 44% express both convictions; 37% believe one but not the other, while 19% of self-identified white evangelicals do not embrace either *sola fide* or *sola scriptura*.

These are among the main findings of a new survey, conducted May 30 to Aug. 9, 2017, among participants in Pew Research Center's nationally representative American Trends Panel. In addition to exploring American beliefs about *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, the survey also included several questions about knowledge of the Reformation and about perceptions of whether Protestantism and Catholicism today are more alike or different.

Most Protestants in the survey (70%) correctly identified "the Reformation" as the term commonly used to refer to the historical period in which Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church. And a similar share (71%) picked Martin Luther when asked to identify the name of the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation. Still, significant minorities of Protestants answered these multiple-choice questions incorrectly. Nearly one-in-five, for instance, named "the Great Crusade" as the term for the period in which Protestants and Catholics split, while 3% chose "the Great Schism" and another 3% said they thought "the French Revolution" was the name of that historical period.

And when asked which religious group traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone (only Protestants, only Catholics, both or neither), just one-quarter of U.S. Protestants correctly answered "only Protestants" (27%). A plurality of Protestants (44%) say both

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<sup>1</sup> Eire, Carlos M.N. 2016. "Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650." Pages 173-174.

Protestantism and Catholicism teach *sola fide*, while 19% say neither tradition teaches this and 8% say only Catholicism holds that salvation comes through faith alone.

The new survey also shows that majorities of both Protestants and Catholics in America say the two traditions are, religiously, “more similar than they are different.” About two-thirds of Catholics (65%) take this position, as do 57% of Protestants (including 67% of white mainline Protestants). Respondents were asked an additional question about how similar certain religions are to their own faith. Roughly half of both Protestants and Catholics say that the other tradition is at least somewhat similar to their own, while fewer say the same about other religions such as Judaism, Mormonism and Islam.

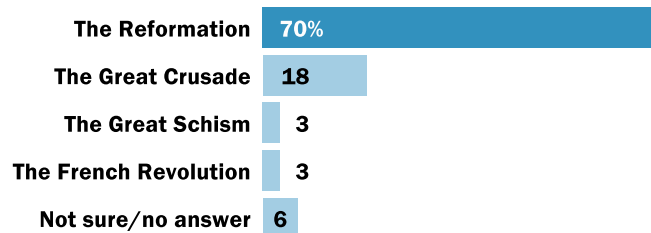
Pew Research Center also asked Catholics and Protestants in Western Europe about their opinions on issues related to the Protestant Reformation, including some of the same questions that were asked in the United States. The results of the Western Europe survey can be [found here](#).

## Few American Protestants know *sola fide* is Protestant belief

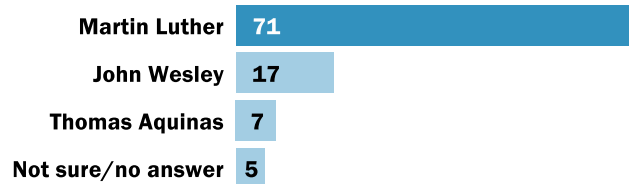
Based on U.S. Protestants

■ Correct answer

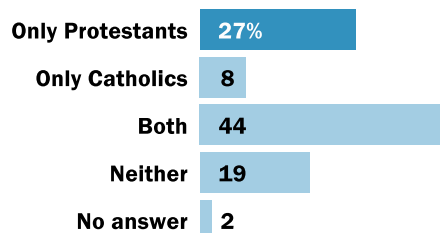
What is the term commonly used to refer to the historical period in which Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church?



What was the name of the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation?



Which of these religious groups traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone (*sola fide*)?



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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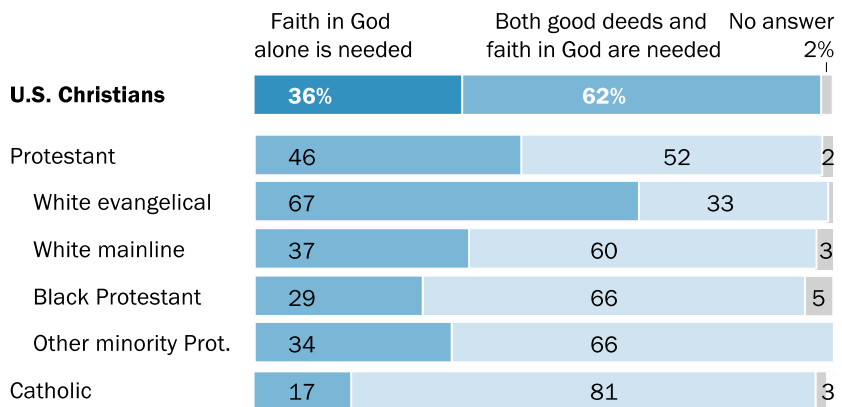
## Reformation beliefs: Protestants mostly reject belief in purgatory, but divided over sola fide and sola scriptura

### One issue that split

Protestants and Catholics during the Reformation was disagreement over whether Christians attain salvation in heaven through faith in God alone, or through a combination of faith and good works. Generally speaking, Martin Luther and other Protestant reformers in the 16th century espoused the belief that salvation is attained only through faith in Jesus and his atoning sacrifice on the cross (*sola fide*), while Catholicism taught that salvation comes through a combination of faith plus good works (e.g., living a virtuous life and seeking forgiveness for sins).<sup>2</sup>

### U.S. Protestants divided over whether faith alone or faith plus good works are needed for eternal life

% of U.S. Christians who say \_\_\_ to get into heaven



Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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Today, most Christians in the U.S. (62%) say that both faith in God and good deeds are necessary to get into heaven. Fully eight-in-ten Catholics (81%) hold this view, but so do majorities of white mainline Protestants (60%), black Protestants (66%) and other minority Protestants (66%).

<sup>2</sup> Many Protestant leaders and theologians have engaged since the 1960s in ecumenical dialogues with the Vatican on various issues, including beliefs about salvation. In 1999, the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church issued a "[Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification](#)" with broad agreement on the role of faith in justification, which in both Protestant and Catholic soteriology (theology of salvation) is the moment at which a person is made just (cleansed of sin, declared righteous) by the grace of God. Pope John Paul II called the joint declaration a "milestone on the not always easy road towards the restoration of full unity among Christians." In subsequent years, some other Protestant groups (the World Methodist Council, in 2006; and the World Communion of Reformed Churches, in 2017) formally adopted the joint declaration. However, some other Protestant churches have rejected the declaration. For example, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the second largest Lutheran denomination in the United States, has [declared](#) that "very significant differences" remain between its view of salvation and the Catholic view. And some critics, including both Catholics and Protestants, contend that the declaration's wording [papered over](#) important theological divisions and was [not a real breakthrough](#).

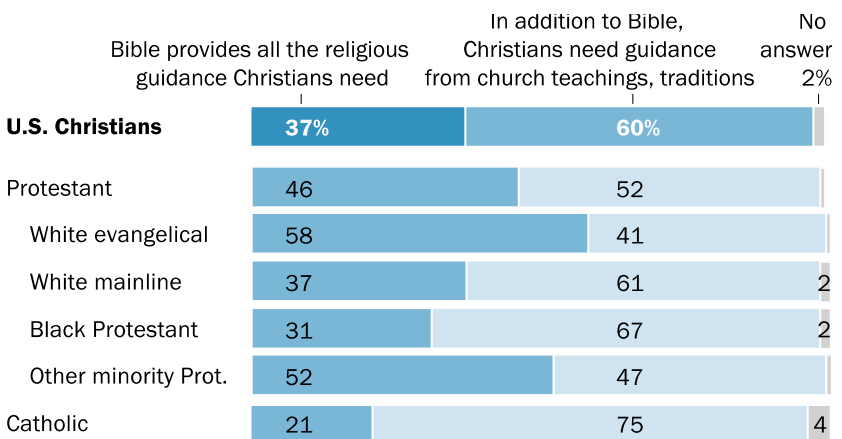
White evangelicals are the only Protestant subgroup analyzed in the survey in which most take the opposite position. Two-thirds of white evangelicals (67%) say salvation comes through faith alone, while 33% say that both faith and good works are needed for salvation.<sup>3</sup>

The survey finds a similar pattern in response to a question about sola scriptura, the idea (held by Protestant reformers) that the Bible is the sole source of religious authority for Christians. Catholicism, by contrast, holds that Christians should look both to the Bible and to church teachings and traditions for guidance.<sup>4</sup>

Most U.S. Christians (60%) do not accept the idea that the Bible can be the sole source of religious guidance for Christians, saying instead that in addition to scripture, Christians also need religious guidance from church teachings and traditions. The view that both the Bible and church traditions are necessary for guidance is expressed by most Catholics (75%), black Protestants (67%) and white mainline Protestants (61%).

### Half of U.S. Protestants, three-quarters of U.S. Catholics say Christians need guidance from Bible and church teachings

% of U.S. Christians who say ...



Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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<sup>3</sup> In this report, black Protestants and other minority Protestants are generally reported on separately from white evangelical Protestants and white mainline Protestants because they often exhibit distinctive patterns of responses. Among all evangelical Protestants, including both whites and racial and ethnic minorities, 57% say that faith alone is what gets people into heaven, while 43% say that both faith and good deeds are necessary for eternal salvation. Among all mainline Protestants, including both whites and nonwhites, 30% say faith alone is needed for salvation, while 65% say that both faith and good works are necessary to get to heaven.

<sup>4</sup> A middle view, of sorts, is associated with the Episcopal Church and its worldwide body, the Anglican Communion. Anglicans emphasize three sources of religious authority: scripture, tradition and reason. Anglican clergy often evoke the image of a [three-legged stool](#) that needs each of its legs to remain upright. The Anglican Communion's founding body, the Church of England, separated in the 1530s from Roman Catholicism, but its emergence as a distinct entity was not part of the Protestant Reformation. For purposes of analysis, though, members of the Episcopal Church are included in this report in the *broadly defined* Protestant category.

The balance of opinion among white evangelical Protestants leans in the other direction: 58% say the Bible does indeed provide all the religious guidance Christians need, while 41% say guidance from the Bible must be supplemented by church teachings and traditions.<sup>5</sup>

Taken together, just three-in-ten U.S. Protestants believe in both *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*. Belief in both teachings is most common among white evangelical Protestants, among whom 44% affirm that salvation comes through faith alone *and* that the Bible is the sole authority to which Christians should look for religious guidance.

Two-thirds of Catholics reject both *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, saying instead that salvation depends on faith and good works and that Christians need religious guidance from both the Bible and church traditions and teachings.

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### Three-in-ten U.S. Protestants believe in both *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*

	All U.S. Christians	Among Protestants				Other minority Protestant	Catholic
		All U.S. Protestants	White evangelical	White mainline	Black Protestant		
% who believe ...	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Both</u> <i>sola fide</i> and <i>sola scriptura</i>	22	30	44	20	19	23	7
NET One but not the other	31	35	37	36	22	41	26
<i>Sola fide</i> , not <i>sola scriptura</i>	15	18	23	17	12	12	10
<i>Sola scriptura</i> , not <i>sola fide</i>	17	17	14	18	10	30	16
Neither	<u>47</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>68</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Analysis based on those who answered both questions.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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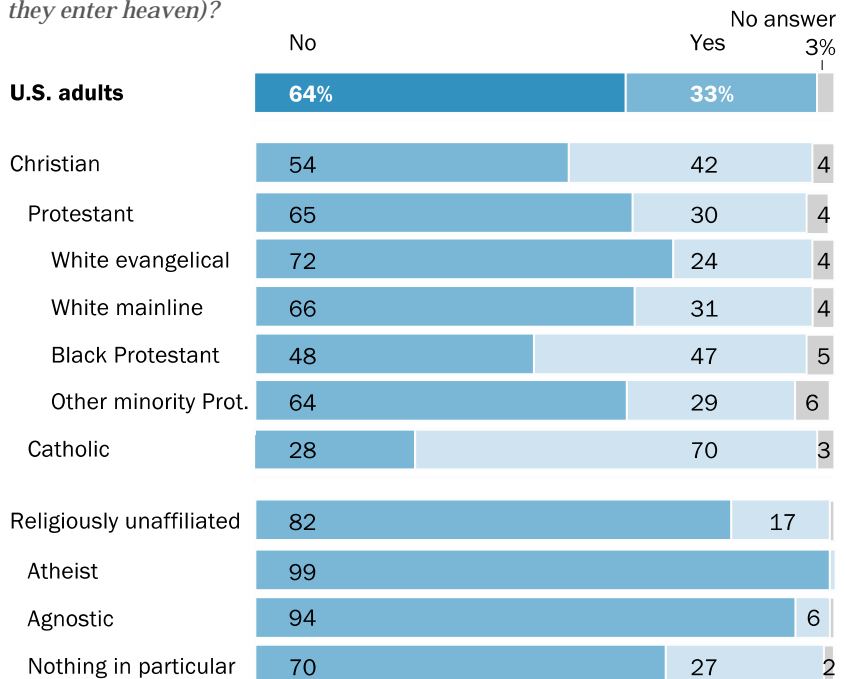
<sup>5</sup> Among all evangelical Protestants, including both whites and racial and ethnic minorities, 52% say the Bible provides all the religious guidance Christians need and 47% say Christians need religious guidance from both the Bible and church teachings and traditions. Among all mainline Protestants, including both whites and nonwhites, 38% say the Bible alone provides all the guidance Christians need, while 60% say Christians need guidance from both scripture and church teachings.

Another theological sticking point between Protestants and Catholics centered on purgatory, the Catholic teaching (rejected by many Protestant reformers) that after death, the souls of some people undergo a period of “purgation,” or cleansing, of their sins before entering heaven.<sup>6</sup>

In the U.S. today, seven-in-ten Catholics say they believe in purgatory. Black Protestants are closely divided on this question. By contrast, most white evangelical Protestants (72%) and white mainline Protestants (66%) say they do not believe in purgatory.<sup>7</sup>

### Three-in-ten U.S. Protestants say they believe in purgatory

*Do you believe in purgatory (where people are cleansed of their sins before they enter heaven)?*



Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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<sup>6</sup> MacCulloch, Diarmaid. 2003. “The Reformation: A History.”

<sup>7</sup> Among all evangelical Protestants, including both whites and racial and ethnic minorities, 28% say they believe in purgatory while 68% do not. Among all mainline Protestants, including both whites and nonwhites, 35% believe in purgatory and 61% do not.

The survey finds that among white evangelical Protestants, higher levels of religious observance and educational attainment are linked with greater acceptance of the teachings of Protestant Reformation leaders. For example, eight-in-ten white evangelicals who say they attend church on a weekly basis say salvation comes through faith alone, compared with 54% among evangelicals who attend church less regularly. And whereas 72% of white evangelical college graduates say the Bible provides all the religious guidance Christians need, just 53% of evangelicals with less education say this.<sup>8</sup>

Among Catholics, these patterns are not always clear. Catholic college graduates, however, are somewhat more likely than Catholics with less education to espouse the traditionally Catholic position that salvation comes through a combination of faith and good works.

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<sup>8</sup> The survey included too few interviews with respondents from other Protestant traditions for this kind of analysis. One exception is that the survey included enough interviews with white mainline Protestants to subdivide them by educational attainment. White mainline Protestants who completed college are less likely than those with fewer years of schooling to believe in purgatory (20% vs. 37%), less likely to say the Bible provides all the religious guidance Christians need (28% vs. 41%), and about as likely to say that faith alone leads to eternal salvation (33% vs. 38%).

## Among U.S. white evangelicals, regular church attendance and higher levels of educational attainment linked with belief in *sola fide*, *sola scriptura*

	Among white evangelical Protestants				Among Catholics			
	Attend church ...		Educational attainment ...		Attend church ...		Educational attainment ...	
	Weekly or more	Less often	Less than college	College+	Weekly or more	Less often	Less than college	College+
<i>To get into heaven, one needs ...</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Faith alone ( <i>sola fide</i> )	80	54	62	81	20	16	20	8
Faith and good deeds	19	46	37	18	79	81	77	90
No answer	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Christians need religious guidance from ...</i>								
Bible alone ( <i>sola scriptura</i> )	68	49	53	72	22	21	23	15
Bible and church teachings/traditions	32	50	46	27	77	74	73	81
No answer	<u>&lt;1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>% who believe ...</i>								
<u>Both</u> <i>sola fide</i> & <i>sola scriptura</i>	59	30	38	65	12	4	9	1
NET One but not the other	31	43	41	26	18	29	27	23
<i>Sola fide, not sola scriptura</i>	22	24	25	18	8	11	11	8
<i>Sola scriptura, not sola fide</i>	9	19	16	8	11	18	16	15
Neither	<u>10</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>76</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Do you believe in purgatory?</i>								
No	86	61	66	91	22	29	27	31
Yes	11	36	30	7	77	67	70	69
No answer	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>&lt;1</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Whites include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Analysis of share who believe in both *sola fide* and *sola scriptura* based on those who answered both questions.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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**In their own words: What determines whether a person gains eternal life?**

While some Christian respondents in the survey were asked a multiple-choice question about what is needed to get to heaven – and given “faith in God is the only thing” and “both good deeds and faith in God” as response options – others were asked to answer the question in their own words. This approach elicited a variety of responses, providing a different way of looking at Christians’ views on this topic.

On the forced-choice question, U.S. Christians lean toward “both good deeds and faith in God” as key to getting into heaven (62%). But when presented with the open-ended question, Christians are more evenly divided: 46% gave responses that fit into the broad category of actions, while a similar share (43%) mentioned beliefs as the key to eternal life. (Respondents had the option to give multiple responses, but most did not.)

Generally being a good person and asking forgiveness for sins were among the most common actions mentioned as key to getting into heaven; other Christians in this category said that following the “golden rule” or God’s will is how one gains eternal life. When it comes to beliefs, Christians most commonly cited “belief in Jesus Christ” or “belief in God” as crucial to salvation.

White evangelical Protestants were more likely than any other religious group to say beliefs determine whether a person gains eternal life. Fully two-thirds of white evangelicals said belief in Jesus or having a personal relationship with Jesus is the key to gaining eternal life. According to one white evangelical Protestant respondent, “whether or not they have accepted Jesus as their personal savior” determines whether one will gain eternal life in heaven.

Catholics, meanwhile, were especially likely to suggest that good actions are what lead to eternal life (60%). Three-in-ten Catholics, for example, said being a good person will lead to eternal life (32%), and 14% mentioned treating others nicely or as you would like to be treated. In the words of one Catholic respondent, “treating people with respect and how you would want to be treated and praying to the Lord for forgiveness for your sins” determines who will go to heaven.

## Two-thirds of white evangelicals say belief in Jesus is key to gaining eternal life

*And just in your own words, what do you think determines whether a person will gain eternal life?*

	All Christian	All Protestant	White evangelical	White mainline	Black Prot.	Other minority Prot.	Catholic
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Actions</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>60</b>
Being good person/living good life/doing good works/moral values/how you live your life	19	14	4	28	15	14	32
Must repent/ask forgiveness for sins	12	15	21	10	11	12	8
Treating others nicely/as you'd like to be treated	7	5	1	11	4	4	14
Living life in accordance with God's commands/God's will/the Bible	6	6	6	5	7	8	4
Following Ten Commandments	3	2	1	2	2	3	5
Behaving like Jesus/living good Christian life	3	3	4	2	2	2	3
Other actions/generic actions	4	2	2	4	2	1	7
<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>19</b>
Belief in Jesus/the Lord/relationship with Jesus/Jesus' mercy/being born again or saved	32	41	66	17	23	40	9
Belief in God/higher power/relationship with God	11	12	9	12	17	15	8
Belief in the Bible	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	0	0
Other beliefs/having faith/generic beliefs	3	3	2	2	7	4	4
<b>Other</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Eternal life is up to God/God's mercy/God's grace	3	3	3	2	2	4	2
Intentions (e.g., having a good heart)	1	1	2	1	3	0	1
Karma	<1	<1	0	<1	0	1	0
All others	1	1	<1	1	2	<1	1
<b>Everyone/nearly everyone achieves eternal life</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Nothing determines eternal life/no way to know what determines eternal life/can't gain eternal life</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>
<b>Secular responses (e.g., science, people live on in memories/legacy)</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>
<b>Do not believe in eternal life</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Unclear</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Don't know/unsure</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>

Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures do not add to 100% because multiple responses were permitted. Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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## Knowledge about the Reformation: Most know about Martin Luther and recognize the term ‘Protestant,’ fewer know sola fide is a Protestant belief

To gauge Americans’ knowledge about the Reformation, the survey asked a series of multiple-choice questions, each with one historically accurate response. When asked to identify “the term commonly used to refer to the historical period in which Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church,” two-thirds of the general public (65%) correctly chose the Reformation. About one-in-five (18%) chose “the Great Crusade,” while 6% said “the Great Schism” and 5% said “the French Revolution.”

Similar shares of U.S. Christians (66%) and religiously unaffiliated Americans (63%) answered this question correctly, with self-identified atheists (85%) doing especially well.

But within Christianity, there were some major differences. Protestants (70%) – especially white evangelical Protestants

### Most U.S. Protestants know the Reformation was when Protestants broke away from Catholic Church

*What is the term commonly used to refer to the historical period in which Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church?*

	The Reformation (correct answer)	The Great Schism	The Great Crusade	The French Revolution	Not sure	No answer
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>U.S. adults</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1=100</b>
Christian	66	5	18	3	7	1
Protestant	70	3	18	3	5	1
White evangelical	75	2	19	1	3	0
White mainline	73	4	15	1	6	1
Black Protestant	58	3	22	8	7	3
Other minority Prot.	68	3	19	3	6	0
Catholic	57	9	19	5	11	<1
Unaffiliated	63	8	17	7	5	1
Atheist	85	9	2	2	2	<1
Agnostic	73	9	15	0	2	1
Nothing in particular	54	7	22	10	6	1
Less than college	57	6	22	6	9	1
College+	83	6	8	<1	2	<1
Ages 18-29	56	8	23	7	5	1
30-49	62	7	18	7	5	<1
50-64	65	6	16	2	10	<1
65+	78	2	13	1	6	1

Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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**(75%) and white mainline Protestants (73%) – were more likely than Catholics (57%) to identify the Reformation correctly.<sup>9</sup>**

**Roughly eight-in-ten college-educated adults (83%) and adults over the age of 65 (78%) correctly said the Reformation is the term for the historical period when Protestants broke away from Catholicism. By comparison, 57% of adults without a college degree and 56% of adults under 30 correctly answered this question.**

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<sup>9</sup> Among all evangelical Protestants, including both whites and racial and ethnic minorities, 70% correctly answered that the Reformation is the term commonly used to refer to the historical period in which Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church. Among all mainline Protestants, including both whites and nonwhites, 72% correctly answered that the Reformation is the term commonly used to refer to the historical period in which Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church.

Respondents were also asked: “What was the name of the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation?” Fully two-thirds of the general public (67%) correctly chose Martin Luther. Fewer said John Wesley (16%) or Thomas Aquinas (10%), while 6% said they were unsure who inspired the Protestant Reformation.

Majorities of adults across all major Christian and unaffiliated subgroups correctly identified Martin Luther as the person who inspired the Protestant Reformation.<sup>10</sup>

Fully eight-in-ten college graduates correctly chose Martin Luther, compared with roughly six-in-ten adults (62%) who have less than a college education.

## Most U.S. Protestants, U.S. Catholics know Martin Luther inspired the Reformation

*As far as you know, what was the name of the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation?*

	Martin Luther (correct answer) %	Thomas Aquinas %	John Wesley %	Not sure %	No answer %
<b>U.S. adults</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1=100</b>
Christian	68	8	16	7	1
Protestant	71	7	17	4	1
White evangelical	67	7	21	5	1
White mainline	69	4	21	4	2
Black Protestant	77	9	10	5	<1
Other minority Protestant	79	11	7	3	0
Catholic	62	11	14	13	1
Unaffiliated	66	13	17	4	<1
Atheist	75	18	6	1	0
Agnostic	65	15	13	6	0
Nothing in particular	63	11	22	4	<1
Less than college	62	11	19	8	1
College+	80	7	9	3	<1
Ages 18-29	65	16	14	5	0
30-49	67	11	15	6	<1
50-64	68	8	18	6	1
65+	71	4	15	8	2

Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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<sup>10</sup> Among all evangelical Protestants, including both whites and racial and ethnic minorities, 71% correctly named Martin Luther as the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation. Among all mainline Protestants, including both whites and nonwhites, 71% correctly named Martin Luther as the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation.

Far fewer U.S. adults identified the religious group that traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone. (Respondents were given a list of four options: only Protestants, only Catholics, both or neither).

About a quarter of the general public (23%) correctly answered that only Protestants traditionally teach that salvation comes through faith alone. A plurality of U.S. adults (45%) said both Protestants and Catholics believe in sola fide, and one-in-ten said only Catholics hold this belief (11%). About one-in-five said neither Protestants nor Catholics believe this (19%).

Four-in-ten white evangelical Protestants (42%) answered this question correctly, but fewer white mainline Protestants (14%), black Protestants (14%) and Catholics (17%) did so.<sup>11</sup> In

fact, about half of Catholics incorrectly said that Catholicism traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone (including 13% who said only Catholicism teaches this, and 41% who said both Catholicism and Protestantism do). Atheists and agnostics were more likely than members of several Christian subgroups to correctly answer the question.

## Few American Protestants, Catholics know that only Protestants traditionally teach *sola fide*

*As far as you know, which of these religious groups traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone?*

	Only Protestants (correct answer)	Only Catholics	Both	Neither	No answer
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>U.S. adults</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3=100</b>
Christian	23	10	43	21	3
Protestant	27	8	44	19	2
White evangelical	42	3	39	16	1
White mainline	14	14	53	16	2
Black Protestant	14	9	40	34	3
Other minority Prot.	27	9	46	18	1
Catholic	17	13	41	26	5
Unaffiliated	23	12	47	14	3
Atheist	30	12	43	14	1
Agnostic	33	11	43	8	5
Nothing in particular	19	12	49	17	3
Less than college	18	12	47	19	4
College+	33	8	38	18	3
Ages 18-29	22	15	42	18	3
30-49	26	12	44	16	2
50-64	21	9	46	18	5
65+	19	6	46	25	3

Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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<sup>11</sup> Among all evangelical Protestants, including both whites and racial and ethnic minorities, 35% correctly answered that Protestants are the religious group that traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone. Among all mainline Protestants, including both whites and nonwhites, 14% correctly answered that Protestants are the religious group that traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone.

College graduates did somewhat better on this question than those without a college degree, but still, just a third of college-educated adults correctly said that only Protestants teach sola fide.

Analysis of the data shows that for Protestants, *knowing* that only Protestantism traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone is closely linked with *believing* that salvation comes through faith alone. Among Protestants who know that only Protestantism traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone, about three-quarters (77%) embrace the concept of sola fide. But among the much larger share of Protestants who are not aware that sola fide is solely a Protestant teaching, far fewer (35%) believe that faith is all that is needed to get into heaven.

The survey asked respondents whether they are familiar with the term “Protestant,” and seven-in-ten U.S. adults said they are (72%). Three-quarters of Protestants (76%) say they are aware of the term, while slightly smaller shares of religiously unaffiliated adults (69%) and Catholics say the same (67%).<sup>12</sup>

Among Protestants, roughly eight-in-ten white mainline (81%) and white evangelical Protestants (80%) say they are familiar with this term, while two-thirds of black Protestants say the same.<sup>13</sup> And among religious “nones,” atheists and agnostics are more likely than those who say their religion is “nothing in particular” to be familiar with the term “Protestant.”

Nine-in-ten college graduates say they know the word “Protestant,” compared with 64% of those who have not received a college degree.

Age also is related to familiarity with the term “Protestant.” Adults ages 65 and older are much more likely than younger adults to say they are familiar with the word.

## Most U.S. Christians say they are familiar with the term ‘Protestant’

Are you familiar with the term “Protestant,” or not?

	Yes %	No %	No answer %
<b>U.S. adults</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1=100</b>
Christian	74	26	<1
Protestant	76	24	1
White evangelical	80	20	0
White mainline	81	18	1
Black Protestant	66	32	2
Other minority Protestant	67	33	0
Catholic	68	32	<1
Unaffiliated	69	30	<1
Atheist	83	17	0
Agnostic	87	13	0
Nothing in particular	60	40	1
Less than college	64	36	1
College+	91	9	<1
Ages 18-29	62	38	0
30-49	71	29	<1
50-64	70	29	<1
65+	86	12	2

Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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<sup>12</sup> It is possible for respondents to be categorized as Protestants in the survey even if they say they do not recognize the term. The [questionnaire](#) asks, “What is your present religion, if any?” One of the response options reads “Protestant (for example, Baptist, Methodist, nondenominational, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Episcopalian, Reformed, Church of Christ, etc.).” Respondents who choose this option because they recognize their denomination in the list of examples are categorized as Protestants even if they are unfamiliar with the term. Another response option is “something else,” and those choosing this option are asked to specify their religion. By way of specifying, some respondents describe themselves as “Christian” or name a specific Protestant denomination (e.g., Seventh-day Adventist); these, too, are categorized as Protestants in the analysis.

<sup>13</sup> Among all evangelical Protestants, including both whites and racial and ethnic minorities, 75% say they are familiar with the term “Protestant,” while 25% say they are not familiar with the term. Among all mainline Protestants, including both whites and nonwhites, 77% say they are familiar with the term “Protestant,” while 21% say they are not familiar with the term.

Respondents who said they are familiar with the term “Protestant” were asked to describe, in their own words, what the term means. The most common responses defined Protestant as Christians who are not Catholics or who don’t follow the pope (32%). For example, one respondent said Protestant means, “to belong to a religion that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church in ‘protest,’ or to object.” Another said Protestant referred to “those who protested against the perceived abuses by the pope and the Roman Catholic Church. Today, non-Catholic Christian denominations.”

One-in-ten respondents said Protestantism is a type of Christianity or someone who holds Christian beliefs. Others used the word “reform” or “Reformation” to define Protestant (4%), and still others referenced Martin Luther, said Protestantism is a type of religion or set of beliefs, or offered examples of some Protestant denominations (3% each).

## Many Americans see Protestants as Christians who are not Catholic

*Just in your own words, what does the term “Protestant” mean?*

	%
Not Catholic/Christians who are not Catholic/Christians who do not follow the pope	32
Protestantism is a type of Christianity (generic)/one who holds Christian beliefs	12
Reformation/reform/reformers	4
Reference to Martin Luther	3
Protestantism is a type of religion/a set of beliefs	3
Offered examples of denominations (e.g., Methodist, Baptist, etc.)	3
Protestant means someone who protests	2
Bible/Bible-based	2
Believer/one who believes in God or higher power	1
Western/Western Christian/Western European churches	1
Liberal/moderate/progressive/open/modern	1
Direct, personal relationship with God – no intermediaries	1
Conservative/strict/separatist/fundamentalist	1
One who protests against government, restrictions on religion, established or traditional religion	1
Someone who follows their own beliefs or is not religious	1
Salvation through faith alone	1
Divorce/Protestants allow divorce/Protestants split from Catholicism over divorce rules	1
Other	4
Don’t know	1
No answer	9
No, not familiar with the term ‘Protestant’	28
No answer about whether familiar with term ‘Protestant’	1

Note: Figures do not add to 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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## Most in U.S. say Catholics and Protestants today are religiously more similar than different

Six-in-ten U.S. adults (61%), including 57% of Protestants and 65% of Catholics, say that when they think about Catholics and Protestants today, they consider the two groups more similar than different, religiously. On the other hand, about a third of U.S. adults (36%), including 41% of Protestants and 32% of Catholics, say Catholics and Protestants today are more different than they are similar.

### Nearly six-in-ten U.S. Protestants, two-thirds of U.S. Catholics say Catholics and Protestants today are more similar than different

When you think of Catholics and Protestants *today*, are they ...

	Religiously more similar than different	Religiously more different than similar	No answer
	%	%	%
<b>U.S. adults</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3=100</b>
Christian	59	38	2
Protestant	57	41	2
White evangelical	55	44	1
White mainline	67	31	2
Black Protestant	53	46	1
Other minority Protestant	48	48	5
Catholic	65	32	3
Unaffiliated	62	34	3
Atheist	73	26	1
Agnostic	73	24	3
Nothing in particular	56	40	4

Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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Depending on their response to this question, respondents received a follow-up question asking them to describe, in their own words, the most important way in which the two traditions are similar or different.

Among U.S. adults who said Protestantism and Catholicism are more similar than different, 55% cited shared beliefs as the key similarity. This includes 20% who said the two traditions believe in or worship the same God, and 18% who said both groups believe in Jesus Christ, or believe that he is the Son of God.

One-in-ten said Protestants and Catholics share common practices, such as being active in the community and helping others (3%). And 14% gave a variety of other, positive ways in which the two groups are similar, such as that “they both teach good morals and ethics” or that they are similar “in their mutual tolerance for the other’s approach to faith and justification.”

## Those who view Protestants and Catholics as similar see common beliefs in God, Jesus

*Among U.S. adults who say Protestants and Catholics are more similar than different, religiously, % who say the most important similarity is ...*

	%
<b>NET Beliefs</b>	<b>55</b>
Believe in/worship the same God	20
Believe in Jesus/believe Jesus is Son of God	18
Believe in the Resurrection/salvation through Christ	10
Follow the same/similar religious text	8
Believe in the Trinity	3
Other similar beliefs (e.g., angels, virgin birth, Judgment Day)	5
Similar beliefs, nonspecific (e.g., “same beliefs”)	5
<b>NET Practices</b>	<b>9</b>
Similar rituals/practices (e.g., prayer, baptism, tithing)	7
Both active in community service/helping others/good works	3
<b>NET Other</b>	<b>14</b>
Both Christian	5
Similar values/morals	3
Other	7
<b>Other, negative traits</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Provided difference instead of similarity</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Unclear/uncodeable</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Not sure/don’t know</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>18</b>

Note: Based on those who said Protestants and Catholics are religiously more similar than different. Figures do not sum to 100% or to subtotals indicated because multiple responses were permitted.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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Americans who said Protestants and Catholics are more different than similar, religiously, were asked to describe the most important difference between the two groups. Within this category, the most common type of response was that beliefs are the most important distinction between Catholics and Protestants. This includes 9% who said the most important difference between the two groups is how they view Mary and the saints and 7% who said the key distinction is that Catholics follow the pope. According to one respondent, “Catholics pay heed and much respect to the pope, whereas Protestants are not directly influenced by his statements and ideas.”

Some respondents also cited certain practices – such as prayer and confession – as ways in which Protestants and Catholics differ (11%). And still others noted the differences on a variety of social and political issues (5%). Additional responses highlighted perceptions of rules and strictness across the two faiths. One respondent wrote, “Catholics tend to be a more open-minded denomination,” while another said, “Protestants are more open to letting you live your [life].”

## Pope, saints among key differences seen between Protestants and Catholics

*Among U.S. adults who say Protestants and Catholics are more different than similar, religiously, % who say the most important difference is ...*

	%
<b>NET Beliefs</b>	<b>34</b>
Views of Mary, saints, statues	9
Views of the pope	7
Nature of relationship with God/Jesus (e.g., personal vs. through a priest)	5
Different beliefs on salvation (e.g., grace vs. good works)	5
Believe in/worship different God	3
Views and roles of clergy/celebrity requirements	2
Other different beliefs (e.g., concept of sin, forgiveness)	5
Different beliefs, nonspecific	5
<b>NET Practices</b>	<b>11</b>
Different prayer practices	3
Different confession practices	3
Other different rituals/practices (e.g., Communion, baptism, liturgy)	5
Different rituals/practices, nonspecific	2
<b>NET Other</b>	<b>16</b>
Different social/political views	5
Other differences	13
<b>Provided similarity instead of difference/there is no difference</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Unclear/uncodeable</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Not sure/don't know</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>No answer</b>	<b>27</b>

Note: Based on those who said Protestants and Catholics are religiously more different than similar. Figures do not sum to 100% or to subtotals indicated because multiple responses were permitted.

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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In addition to asking respondents whether Catholics and Protestants, *in general*, are mostly similar to or different from each other, the survey also asked respondents whether they view each of a series of religions as similar to or different from *their own religion*. On this latter question, Protestants and Catholics are split about whether the other Christian tradition is similar to their own faith. Half of Protestants (50%) say they think the Catholic religion is “very similar” or “somewhat similar” to their own religion, while the other half (49%) say Catholicism is “very different” or “somewhat different” from their own faith. Among Catholics, 54% say they think the Protestant religion is very similar or somewhat similar to their own religion, while 42% say Protestantism is very or somewhat different from their own faith.

Although Catholics and Protestants are divided as to how much the other faith resembles their own, members of each group are far more likely to say the other is similar to their own faith than they are to say any other religion is similar to their own. For example, while half of Protestants say Catholicism is similar to their own religion, just 32% say the same about Judaism, 19% say this about Mormonism, and about one-in-ten say this about Islam (12%), Buddhism (9%) or Hinduism (8%). Among Catholics, 41% say Judaism is similar to their own religion, while fewer say this about Mormonism, Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism.

## Half of U.S. Protestants say Catholicism is similar to their religion; half of Catholics say the same about Protestantism

	% who say ___ religion is “very similar” or “somewhat similar” to their own religion						
	Catholic	Protestant	Mormon	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu
Among ...	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Protestant	50	n/a	19	32	12	9	8
White evangelical	48	n/a	18	32	8	5	6
White mainline	58	n/a	25	33	15	13	12
Black Protestant	41	n/a	13	23	15	9	6
Other minority Protestant	50	n/a	16	38	14	15	13
Catholic	n/a	54	21	41	17	17	13

	% who say ___ religion is “very similar” or “somewhat similar” to their own beliefs						
	Catholic	Protestant	Mormon	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu
Among ...							
Unaffiliated	26	22	10	18	15	38	23
Atheist	4	5	3	4	4	32	12
Agnostic	26	25	11	21	19	45	29
Nothing in particular	34	27	11	22	17	37	24

Note: Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Those who identify with a religion (e.g., Protestants and Catholics) were asked whether each is “very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, or very different” from “your own religion.” Those who are religiously unaffiliated were asked whether each is “very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, or very different” from “your own beliefs.”

Source: Survey conducted May 30-Aug. 9, 2017.

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## The American Trends Panel survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults recruited from landline and cellphone random-digit dial surveys. Panelists participate via monthly self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Abt Associates.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted May 30 to Aug. 9, 2017, among 5,198 respondents. The questions analyzed in this report were each asked of a random half of respondents. The margin of sampling error for the random half of respondents who received the questions on “Form 1” of the survey (n=2,623) is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points. The margin of sampling error for the random half of respondents who received the questions on “Form 2” of the survey (n=2,575) is also plus or minus 2.9 percentage points. Details about which questions were asked of “Form 1” respondents and which were asked of “Form 2” respondents are provided in the [survey topline](#).

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from several large, national landline and cellphone random-digit dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate.<sup>14</sup> The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Pew Research Center Survey on Government, conducted Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015. All 6,004 adults interviewed were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate.<sup>15</sup> The third group of panelists was recruited from a survey conducted April 25 to June 4, 2017. Of the 5,012 adults interviewed in the survey or pretest, 3,905 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 1,628 agreed to participate.<sup>16</sup>

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents’ original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the

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<sup>14</sup> When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

<sup>15</sup> Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after Feb. 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

<sup>16</sup> White, non-Hispanic college graduates were subsampled at a rate of 50%.

propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on a number of dimensions. Gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region parameters come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey. The county-level population density parameter (deciles) comes from the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census. The telephone service benchmark comes from the January to June 2016 National Health Interview Survey and is projected to 2017. The volunteerism benchmark comes from the 2015 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement. The party affiliation benchmark is the average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys. The internet access benchmark comes from the 2015 Survey on Government. Respondents who did not previously have internet access are treated as not having internet access for weighting purposes. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly U.S. born and English speaking.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Form 1	Unweighted sample size	Form 2
		Plus or minus ...		Plus or minus ...
Total sample	2,623	2.9 percentage points	2,575	2.9 percentage points
Christian	1,691	3.6 percentage points	1,611	3.6 percentage points
Protestant	1,134	4.5 percentage points	1,102	4.4 percentage points
<i>White evangelical</i>	444	7.1 percentage points	440	7.0 percentage points
<i>White mainline</i>	375	7.7 percentage points	353	7.8 percentage points
<i>Black Protestant</i>	163	11.7 percentage points	181	10.9 percentage points
<i>Other minority Protestant</i>	143	12.5 percentage points	114	13.7 percentage points
Catholic	478	6.9 percentage points	443	6.9 percentage points
Religiously unaffiliated	699	5.7 percentage points	721	5.4 percentage points
Atheist	159	11.9 percentage points	166	11.3 percentage points
Agnostic	167	11.6 percentage points	178	10.9 percentage points
Nothing in particular	373	7.8 percentage points	377	7.5 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The May 30 to Aug. 9, 2017, wave had a response rate of 77% (5,198 responses among 6,766 individuals in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the wave is 2.7%.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

**2017 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL**  
**WAVE 27.5 NEW MEMBER - MEMBER ENGAGEMENT TOPLINE**  
**MAY 30–AUGUST 9, 2017**  
**TOTAL N=5,198**

**OTHER QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE; SEE [QUESTIONNAIRE](#) FOR FULL DETAILS ON QUESTION WORDING, PROGRAMMING AND CONTEXT.**

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=2,623]:**

KNOWPROTA Are you familiar with the term "Protestant," or not?

May 30-Aug 9,

2017

72

Yes

28

No

1

No answer

**ASK IF FAMILIAR WITH PROTESTANT IN KNOWPROTA:**

KNOWPROTB Just in your own words, what does the term "Protestant" mean?

**BASED ON TOTAL IN FORM 1 [N=2,623]****NOTE: RESULTS DO NOT SUM TO 100% BECAUSE MULTIPLE RESPONSES WERE PERMITTED**May 30-Aug 9,  
2017

32	Not Catholic/Christians who are not Catholic/Christians who do not follow the Pope
12	Protestantism is a type of Christianity (generic) or one who holds Christian beliefs
4	Reformation/reform/reformers
3	Reference to Martin Luther
3	Protestantism is a type of religion/a set of beliefs
3	Offered examples of denominations (e.g., Methodist, Baptist, etc.)
2	Protestant means someone who protests
2	Bible/Bible-based
1	Believer/one who believes in God or higher power
1	Western/Western Christian/Western European churches
1	Liberal/moderate/progressive/open/modern
1	Direct, personal relationship with God (no intermediaries)
1	Conservative/strict/separatist/fundamentalist
1	One who protests against government, restrictions on religion, established or traditional religion
1	Someone who follows their own beliefs or is not religious
1	Salvation through faith alone
1	Divorce/Protestants allow divorce/Protestants split from Catholicism over divorce rules
<1	Similar to Catholic/type of Catholic
<1	Evangelical/born again
<1	One who protests against the Church of England
<1	Someone who proselytizes or evangelizes
<1	White/White Anglo Saxon
<1	Protestant means someone who belongs to a Protestant church
<1	Indulgences
<1	References to oneself (e.g., 'I am a Protestant')
2	Other
1	Don't know
9	Refused
28	No, not familiar with the term 'Protestant' (in KNOWPROTA)
1	Refused to say whether familiar with term 'Protestant' (in KNOWPROTA)



**ASK FORM 1 IF CHRISTIAN [N=1,691]:**

SOLAFIDES Which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?  
[RANDOMIZE]

May 30-Aug 9,

2017

62	Both good deeds and faith in God are necessary to get into heaven
36	Faith in God is the only thing that gets people into heaven
<1	Undesignated <sup>18</sup>
2	No answer

**ASK FORM 1 IF CHRISTIAN [N=1,691]:**

SOLASCRIP Which statement comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right?

May 30-Aug 9,

2017

37	The Bible provides all the religious guidance Christians need
	In addition to the Bible, Christians also need religious guidance from
60	church teachings and traditions
<1	Undesignated <sup>19</sup>
2	No answer

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=2,575]:**

KLUTHER As far as you know...What was the name of the person whose writings and actions inspired the Protestant Reformation? [RANDOMIZE "MARTIN LUTHER," "THOMAS AQUINAS," AND "JOHN WESLEY"]

May 30-Aug 9,

2017

67	Martin Luther ( <i>Correct</i> )
10	Thomas Aquinas
16	John Wesley
6	Not sure <sup>20</sup>
1	No answer

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=2,623]:**

CATHPROTA When you think of Catholics and Protestants TODAY, are they religiously more similar than they are different, or are they religiously more different than they are similar?

May 30-Aug 9,

2017

61	Religiously more similar than they are different
36	Religiously more different than they are similar
3	No answer

<sup>18</sup> For some questions asked of a subset of eligible respondents and filtered on previous questions subject to backcoding, the term "undesignated" is used to denote those respondents who did not receive the question even though they should have received it.

<sup>19</sup> For some questions asked of a subset of eligible respondents and filtered on previous questions subject to backcoding, the term "undesignated" is used to denote those respondents who did not receive the question even though they should have received it.

<sup>20</sup> "Not sure" only displayed if respondent originally skipped the question.

**ASK IF R SAYS MORE SIMILAR IN CATHPROTA [N=1,785]:**

CATHPROTB1 Just in your own words, what is the most important way in which Catholics and Protestants today are religiously similar?

**NOTE: RESULTS DO NOT SUM TO 100% BECAUSE MULTIPLE RESPONSES WERE PERMITTED**

May 30-Aug 9,  
2017

<b>55</b>	<b>NET Beliefs</b>
20	Believe in/worship the same God or one God
18	Both worship/believe in Jesus Christ; believe that Jesus is Son of God
10	Belief in the Resurrection/salvation through Christ
8	Believe in/follow the same/similar Bible/text
3	Believe in/worship the Trinity
5	Other similar beliefs
2	<i>Similar concept of heaven/hell/afterlife</i>
1	<i>Follow Ten Commandments</i>
<1	<i>Belief in salvation through grace/salvation as a gift</i>
<1	<i>Personal relationship with God/Jesus</i>
	<i>Other similar beliefs (e.g. angels, Judgment Day, virgin birth, concept of sin/punishment, etc.)</i>
2	
5	Similar beliefs, nonspecific (e.g. "same beliefs")
<b>9</b>	<b>NET Practices</b>
7	Similar rituals/practices
2	<i>Attend church/both have weekly services</i>
1	<i>Prayer</i>
1	<i>Both observe Communion</i>
1	<i>Similar services (content)</i>
<1	<i>Observe the same holidays</i>
1	<i>Similar rituals/practices, other (e.g. baptism, tithing, etc.)</i>
2	<i>Similar rituals/practices, nonspecific (e.g., "same rituals")</i>
3	Both active in community service/helping others/good works
<b>14</b>	<b>NET Other</b>
5	Both Christian
3	Similar values/morals
7	Other
1	<i>Tolerance/loving neighbors/golden rule</i>
1	<i>Most religions are similar/they just are</i>
1	<i>Similar on social/political issues</i>
1	<i>Becoming more modern/liberal/less rigid</i>
1	<i>Faith</i>
	<i>Similar beginnings/history (e.g. lineage of Abraham, branches of the same religion)</i>
1	
<b>3</b>	<b>Other, negative traits</b>
1	Intolerant/strict/rigid/outdated
<1	Both hypocritical/liars
1	Other negative similarities
<b>1</b>	<b>Provided difference instead of similarity</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Unclear/uncodeable</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Not sure/don't know</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>No answer/refused</b>

**ASK IF R SAYS MORE DIFFERENT IN CATHPROTA [N=722]:**

CATHPROTB2 Just in your own words, what is the most important difference between Catholics and Protestants today?

**NOTE: RESULTS DO NOT SUM TO 100% BECAUSE MULTIPLE RESPONSES WERE PERMITTED**

May 30-Aug 9,  
2017

<b>34</b>	<b>NET Beliefs</b>
9	Views of Mary/saints/statues
7	Views of the pope
	Nature of relationship with God/Jesus (e.g. personal vs. through a priest/mediator)
5	
5	Different beliefs on salvation (e.g. grace vs. good works)
3	Believe in/worship different God
2	Views and roles of clergy; celibacy requirements
5	Other different beliefs
2	<i>Different understandings/interpret actions of the Bible/holy text</i>
1	<i>Different beliefs, other (e.g. concept of sin, forgiveness)</i>
1	<i>Different beliefs on Trinity; one believes, one does not</i>
<1	<i>Belief in Purgatory/different beliefs in afterlife</i>
5	Different beliefs, nonspecific (e.g. "different beliefs")
<b>11</b>	<b>NET Practices</b>
3	Different prayer practices
3	Different confession practice (e.g. through a priest vs. direct to God)
	Different rituals/practices, other (e.g. confirmation, Sunday School/CCD, marriage)
5	
2	Different rituals/practices, nonspecific (e.g. "different practices")
2	<i>Different services (content, liturgy)</i>
2	<i>Different Communion practices/belief in transubstantiation</i>
	<i>Different rituals/practices, other (e.g. confirmation, Sunday School/CCD, marriage)</i>
1	<i>Different baptism practice</i>
<b>16</b>	<b>Other</b>
5	Different social/political views
3	<i>Different social/political views, other</i>
2	<i>Different views on birth control</i>
1	<i>Different views on abortion</i>
1	<i>Different views on divorce</i>
13	Other differences
3	<i>Catholicism more strict/rigid/rule-based than Protestantism</i>
3	<i>Different church structure/hierarchy/institutional practices</i>
	<i>How they live their lives; how they incorporate God or religion into daily life</i>
2	
2	<i>Catholics have more of a focus on tradition/ceremony</i>
1	<i>All religions are different/they just seem different</i>
1	<i>Catholics more tolerant/open-minded</i>
1	<i>Protestants more tolerant/open-minded</i>
1	<i>Protestantism more strict/rigid/rules-based than Catholicism</i>
	<b>Provided a similarity instead of a difference/there is no difference</b>
<b>2</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Unclear/uncodeable</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Not sure/don't know</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>No answer/refused</b>

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=2,575]:**

BELIEVE Which of the following, if any, do you believe in?

	<u>Yes, believe in</u>	<u>No, don't believe</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Heaven			
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	74	24	2
b. Hell			
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	62	35	3
c. Purgatory (where people are cleansed of their sins before they enter heaven)			
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	33	64	3

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY:**ETERNAL And just in your own words, what do you think determines whether a person will gain eternal life **[IF CHRISTIAN INSERT: in heaven]**?**BASED ON CHRISTIANS [N=1,611]****NOTE: RESULTS DO NOT SUM TO 100% BECAUSE MULTIPLE RESPONSES WERE PERMITTED**May 30-Aug 9,  
2017**46****NET Actions**

- 19 Being good person/living good life/doing good works/moral values/how you live your life
- 12 Must repent/ask forgiveness for sins
- 7 Treating others nicely/as you'd like to be treated
- 6 Living life in accordance with God's commands/God's will/the Bible
- 3 Following Ten Commandments
- 3 Behaving like Jesus/living good Christian life
- 4 Other actions/generic actions

**43****NET Beliefs**

- 32 In Jesus/relationship with Jesus/Jesus' mercy/Being born again/saved
- 11 In God/the Lord/higher power/relationship with God
- <1 In the Bible
- 3 Other beliefs/having faith/generic beliefs

**5****Other**

- 3 It's up to God/God's mercy/God's grace
- 1 Intentions (e.g., having a good heart)
- <1 Karma
- 1 All others

**2****Everyone/nearly everyone achieves eternal life****<1 Nothing determines eternal life/no way to know what determines eternal life/can't gain eternal life****<1****Secular responses (e.g. science, people live on in memories/legacy)****1****Do not believe in eternal life****1****Unclear/uncodeable****2****Don't know/unsure****14****No answer**

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=2,623]:**

KFAITH As far as you know...Which of these religious groups traditionally teaches that salvation comes through faith alone?

**[RANDOMIZE "ONLY PROTESTANTS" AND "ONLY CATHOLICS"]**

May 30-Aug 9,

2017

23	Only Protestants ( <i>Correct</i> )
11	Only Catholics
45	Both
19	Neither
3	No answer

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=2,623]:**

KREFORM What is the term commonly used to refer to the historical period in which Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church? **[RANDOMIZE "THE REFORMATION," "THE GREAT SCHISM," "THE GREAT CRUSADE," "THE FRENCH REVOLUTION"]**

May 30-Aug 9,

2017

65	The Reformation ( <i>Correct</i> )
6	The Great Schism
18	The Great Crusade
5	The French Revolution
7	Not sure <sup>21</sup>
1	No answer

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<sup>21</sup> "Not sure" only displayed if respondent originally skipped the question.

**ASK FORM 2 IF AFFILIATED WITH A RELIGION:**

COMPRELIG From what you know, please tell us whether each of the following religions and your own religion are very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, or very different?

**[RANDOMIZE ITEMS, DISPLAY CHOICES IN FORWARD/REVERSE ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF OF SAMPLE]**

	<u>Very similar</u>	<u>Somewhat similar</u>	<u>Somewhat different</u>	<u>Very different</u>	<u>No answer</u>
<b>ASK IF AFFILIATED AND NOT CATHOLIC</b>					
<b>[N=1,399]:</b>					
a. The Catholic religion					
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	15	34	23	27	1
<b>ASK IF AFFILIATED AND NOT PROTESTANT/OTHER CHRISTIAN</b>					
<b>[N=740]:</b>					
b. The Protestant religion					
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	14	33	23	27	3
<b>ASK IF AFFILIATED AND NOT MORMON</b>					
<b>[N=1,791]:</b>					
c. The Mormon religion					
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	3	17	25	51	3
<b>ASK IF AFFILIATED AND NOT JEWISH</b>					
<b>[N=1,758]:</b>					
d. The Jewish religion					
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	6	29	28	33	4
<b>ASK IF AFFILIATED AND NOT MUSLIM</b>					
<b>[N=1,818]:</b>					
e. The Muslim religion					
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	2	14	17	64	3
<b>ASK IF AFFILIATED AND NOT BUDDHIST</b>					
<b>[N=1,821]:</b>					
f. The Buddhist religion					
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	2	12	17	65	4
<b>ASK IF AFFILIATED AND NOT HINDU</b>					
<b>[N=1,822]:</b>					
g. The Hindu religion					
May 30-Aug 9, 2017	1	11	16	68	4

**ASK FORM 2 IF R IS ATHEIST, AGNOSTIC, NOTHING IN PARTICULAR OR DECLINED TO ANSWER THE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY QUESTION [N=733]:**

COMPBELIEF From what you know, please tell us whether each of the following religions and your own beliefs are very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, or very different?

**[RANDOMIZE ITEMS, DISPLAY CHOICES IN FORWARD/REVERSE ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF OF SAMPLE]**

	<u>Very similar</u>	<u>Somewhat similar</u>	<u>Somewhat different</u>	<u>Very different</u>	<u>Undesignated<sup>22</sup></u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. The Catholic religion May 30-Aug 9, 2017	6	20	19	50	<1	5
b. The Protestant religion May 30-Aug 9, 2017	5	17	21	51	<1	5
c. The Mormon religion May 30-Aug 9, 2017	2	8	15	69	<1	6
d. The Jewish religion May 30-Aug 9, 2017	3	15	22	54	<1	5
e. The Muslim religion May 30-Aug 9, 2017	3	12	18	62	<1	5
f. The Buddhist religion May 30-Aug 9, 2017	7	31	23	35	<1	4
g. The Hindu religion May 30-Aug 9, 2017	3	21	18	53	<1	5

<sup>22</sup> For some questions asked of a subset of eligible respondents and filtered on previous questions subject to backcoding, the term "undesignated" is used to denote those respondents who did not receive the question even though they should have received it.