

Impact of the Romney Campaign

Americans Learned Little About the Mormon Faith, But Some Attitudes Have Softened

America's "Mormon moment" is over, and public opinion appears to be little changed. Eight-in-ten Americans (82%) say they learned little or nothing about the Mormon religion during the presidential campaign, according to a new Pew Research Center poll. Most Americans still are unable to correctly answer basic questions about the history and sacred texts of the Mormon Church. And three-in-ten Americans continue to consider the Mormon religion a non-Christian faith, though there appears to be some warming of attitudes toward Mormonism, especially among religious groups that voted heavily for Mitt Romney in the 2012 election.

These are some of the findings from a new national survey by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, conducted Dec. 5-9, 2012, among 1,503 adults.

During 2012, the public profile of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS or Mormon Church) reached new heights: Romney became the first Mormon nominated for president by a major party, "The Book of Mormon" was a hit musical on Broadway, Time magazine published a story on the "Mormon moment," and the LDS Church ran a nationwide advertising campaign to try to improve perceptions of Mormons.

Romney was the subject of about twice as much religion-related media coverage as Barack Obama in the 2012 presidential campaign, according to a separate [analysis](#) by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism and the Pew Forum. During the course of the campaign, the portion of U.S. adults who are aware that Romney is a Mormon rose steadily from 39% in November 2011 to 65% after the election.

But the vast majority of U.S. adults say they learned either "not very much" (32%) or "nothing at all" (50%) about the Mormon religion during the presidential campaign, according to the new Pew Research Center poll. Indeed, the poll finds that less than one-third of American

Knowledge About the Mormon Religion

	Nov 2011	Dec 2012
	%	%
<i>Self-assessment*</i>		
Know a great deal/some	49	49
<i>Factual knowledge</i>		
Know Mormonism founded after 1800	44	43
Know Book of Mormon says Jesus appeared in the Americas	43	40
<i>Learned during 2012 campaign</i>		
Great deal/some	--	16
Not very much/Nothing at all	--	82

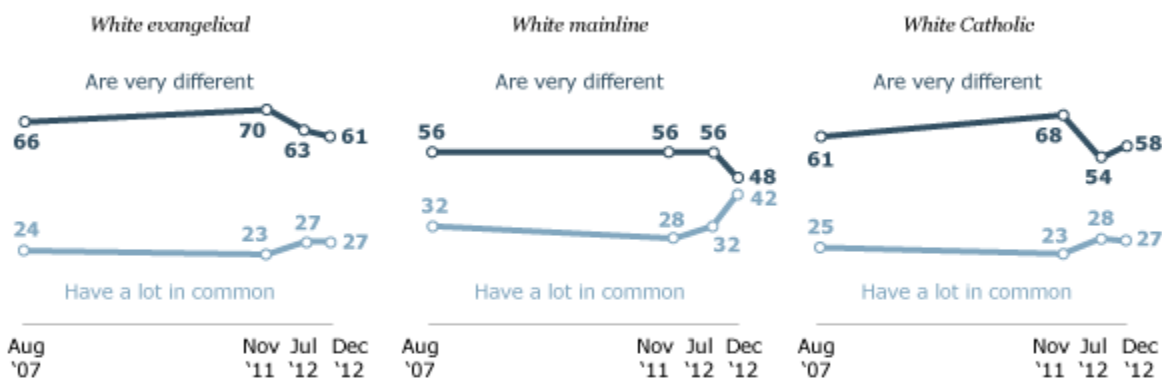
PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q80, Q86-88.

*Based on non-Mormons; all others based on total.

adults (29%) are able to correctly answer two basic, factual questions about the history and sacred texts of the LDS Church, the same percentage that answered both of those questions correctly in 2010.

Public attitudes toward Mormonism, however, appear to be somewhat more positive on two of three indicators on the survey. When asked for one-word impressions of the Mormon religion, more Americans mention positive terms such as “good people,” “dedicated” and “honest” than did so one year ago (24% today vs. 18% in 2011). Impressions of Mormonism using positive descriptors is up among several religious groups, including white evangelical Protestants, white mainline Protestants and white Catholics – all groups that favored Romney in the election.¹

The Mormon Religion Compared with Your Own



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q82. Groups shown are white evangelical Protestants, white mainline Protestants and white Catholics. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic. Those saying don't know are not shown.

In addition, the (non-Mormon) public is a bit less likely to see the Mormon religion as “very different” from their own beliefs; 61% characterize Mormonism as “very different” from their own religion, down 4 points from November 2011. A quarter of adults (25%) now say the Mormon faith has “a lot in common” with their own religion, compared with 22% in 2011. White mainline Protestants (a group that voted 54%-44% for Romney over Obama) are especially likely to have warmed up to Mormonism in the past year: roughly four-in-ten (42%) now see the Mormon religion and their own beliefs as having a lot in common, up 14 points from 28% in November 2011.

¹ See the Pew Forum's November 2012 analysis "[How the Faithful Voted: 2012 Preliminary Analysis.](#)"

Views on whether Mormonism is a Christian faith remain unchanged, however. About half of Americans (53%) continue to say the Mormon religion is a Christian faith, while about half either say it is *not* a Christian faith (30%) or do not give an opinion (17%). There has been little or no change in views on this question among white evangelical Protestants, white mainline Protestants, white Catholics or other religious groups.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE MORMON RELIGION

Media coverage of Romney's faith during the presidential campaign appears to have had little impact on public knowledge about the Mormon religion. Roughly eight-in-ten adults (82%) say they learned either "not very much" (32%) or "nothing at all" (50%) about the Mormon religion during the campaign; just 16% say they learned either "a great deal" (3%) or "some" (13%).

There is also no evidence of overall change in Americans' self-assessment of how much they know about Mormons. About half of (non-Mormon) adults consider themselves to have either a great deal (11%) or some (38%) knowledge about the Mormon religion, about the same level as in previous years.²

Knowledge and the Campaign

% saying they learned ... about the Mormon religion during the 2012 presidential campaign

	A great deal/ Some	Not very much/ Nothing at all	DK
	%	%	%
Total	16	82	2=100
Protestant	18	80	2=100
White evangelical	20	78	2=100
White mainline	13	85	2=100
Catholic	17	81	2=100
White Catholic	21	77	2=100
Unaffiliated	12	88	0=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q86. Based on total. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Self-Evaluation of Knowledge

% saying they know ... about the Mormon religion

	2007	2011	2012
	%	%	%
Great deal/Some	48	49	49
Not very much/Nothing at all	52	50	51
Don't know/Refused	1	1	*
	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q80. Based on non-Mormons. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

² Mormons make up about 2% of all adults in the U.S. For more on Mormon's attitudes and beliefs, see the Pew Forum's January 2012 report "[Mormons in America: Certain in Their Beliefs, Uncertain of Their Place in Society.](#)"

Questions testing factual knowledge about the Mormon religion also show no significant change since 2010. About four-in-ten adults correctly answer that the Mormon religion was founded after 1800 (43%), roughly the same percentage as did so in 2010 (44%). Similarly, 43% say that Jesus Christ appeared in the Americas according to the Book of Mormon, about the same portion that gave the correct answer in 2010 (40%). The percentage who got both of these questions right was exactly the same in both years: 29%.

Factual Knowledge of Mormonism

% who know...	When the Mormon religion was founded	Where Jesus appeared, according to the Book of Mormon	Both correct
	%	%	%
Total	43	43	29
Christian	41	40	28
Protestant	42	41	28
White evangelical	46	42	30
White mainline	43	46	32
Catholic	34	35	22
White Catholic	38	40	27
Unaffiliated	54	51	36

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q87, Q88. Based on total. Those giving an incorrect response or saying "don't know" are not shown. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic.

Knowledge about the Mormon religion is higher among the religiously unaffiliated than among either Protestants or Catholics. More than a third of the unaffiliated (36%) correctly answer both factual questions, as do 28% of Protestants and 22% of Catholics. There is no change in factual knowledge among religious groups, including the unaffiliated, since 2010. There is also no difference in factual knowledge about Mormonism by political party.

ATTITUDES TOWARD MORMONISM

Attitudes about Mormonism, on the other hand, appear to be softening on at least two of three indicators on the Pew Research Center survey. Compared with a year ago, U.S. adults are a bit less likely to see the Mormon faith as “very different” from their own religion, and they are more likely to mention positive terms when asked what one word best conveys their impression of the Mormon religion. Views on whether Mormonism is a Christian religion are unchanged, however.

Commonality with Mormon Beliefs

	November 2011			December 2012		
	Lot in common	Very different	DK	Lot in common	Very different	DK
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total non-Mormon	22	65	13=100	25	61	14=100
Protestant	25	63	12=100	31	58	11=100
White evangelical	23	70	8=100	27	61	12=100
White mainline	28	56	16=100	42	48	10=100
Catholic	23	66	11=100	24	57	19=100
White Catholic	23	68	8=100	27	58	15=100
Unaffiliated	16	73	11=100	16	70	13=100
<i>Party ID</i>						
Rep/lean Rep	25	65	10=100	32	55	13=100
Dem/lean Dem	20	68	13=100	21	67	13=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q82. Based on non-Mormons. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About six-in-ten adults in the (non-Mormon) public (61%) see Mormonism as “very different” from their own faith, down from 65% in 2011; a quarter (25%) see Mormon beliefs as having a lot in common with their own beliefs, about the same as in 2011 (22%).

Overall, more Protestants say their beliefs have a lot in common with Mormons’ beliefs than did so one year ago (31% today vs. 25% in 2011). White mainline Protestants are particularly likely to see more common ground with Mormons’ beliefs; 42% of people in this group say Mormons’ beliefs have a lot in common with their own, up from 28% in 2011.

Other religious groups see a less sharp distinction between their own beliefs and the Mormon religion now than they did in 2011. Among Catholics, for example, fewer say their beliefs are “very different” from Mormons’ beliefs (58% in 2012 vs. 68% in 2011), while more say they don’t know.

This warming of attitudes about the Mormon religion is concentrated among Republicans and independents who lean Republican. Among Republicans and people who lean toward the GOP,

a third (32%) say their own beliefs and Mormon beliefs have a lot in common, up from 25% in November 2011. Views among Democrats and people who lean toward the Democratic Party have stayed about the same.

One-Word Descriptions of Mormonism

In addition, public impressions of the Mormon religion are increasingly positive. When asked in an open-ended question what one word best describes the Mormon religion, more people offer a positive descriptor than did so a year ago, though the single most common association with the Mormon religion is negative.

The most commonly offered word is *cult*, which was given by 70 respondents in this survey, or about 5% of the public. Other common responses are positive descriptors such as *good or good people* (51 responses) and *family or family values* (45 responses). Overall, the percentage of positive descriptors is up six points, from 18% one year ago to 24% today.

Impressions of the Mormon Religion

% of one-word responses

	2011	2012
	%	%
Positive: Good, dedicated, honest, friendly	18	24
Neutral: Different, conservative, Christian	27	23
Negative: Cult, polygamy, restrictive, strange	24	22
No opinion	30	30
	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q81. Based on total. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The Mormon Religion in One Word

Number of respondents saying ...

70	Cult
51	Good/good people
45	Family/family values
29	Faith/faithful
27	Different
24	Devout/devoted
23	Conservative
23	Polygamy/bigamy
22	Christian
21	Strict/restrictive
19	Dedicated

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q81. N=1,503. Figures show the number of respondents mentioning each word (first mention, if there was more than one). See topline for other responses. **The numbers are not percentages.**

White Protestants (both mainline and evangelical) as well as white Catholics use more positive descriptors to describe the Mormon religion today than they did a year ago.

Party identification is also related to views of Mormonism. Republicans and independents who lean Republican use more positive descriptors of the Mormon religion (35%) than do Democrats and people who lean toward the Democratic Party (18%).

Further, Republicans and people who lean toward the Republican Party use more positive terms to describe the Mormon religion today than they did one year ago (35% vs. 23% in 2011). Overall impressions of Mormonism among Democrats and independents who lean Democratic are about the same.

Image of Mormon Religion Trending Positive

% of one-word responses that are ...

	November 2011			December 2012		
	Pos. %	Neutral %	Neg. %	Pos. %	Neutral %	Neg. %
Total	18	27	24	24	23	22
Protestant	17	26	27	26	22	26
White evangelical	17	23	34	27	20	31
White mainline	18	29	25	29	22	22
Catholic	19	27	17	22	22	15
White Catholic	20	33	18	32	20	19
Unaffiliated	17	30	27	21	26	24
<i>Party ID</i>						
Rep/lean Rep	23	27	26	35	22	19
Dem/lean Dem	15	29	24	18	23	27

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q81. Based on total. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic. Those not giving a one-word response are not shown.

White Evangelicals and Views of Mormonism

About half of U.S. adults in the (non-Mormon) general public (53%) say that Mormonism is a Christian religion, roughly the same percentage as in 2011.

Views about this issue are about the same over time among all U.S. religious groups that are large enough for separate analysis.

A majority of white mainline Protestants (65%), white Catholics (64%) and the unaffiliated (57%) say Mormonism is a Christian

faith. By contrast, white evangelical Protestants are divided: 44% say Mormonism is a Christian faith and 40% say it is not.

While white evangelical Protestants are less likely than other religious groups to see Mormonism as a Christian religion, their enthusiasm for Romney in 2012 was as strong as that of his other supporters, and they voted as heavily for Romney as they did for the GOP candidates in 2008 and 2004, according to a recent Pew Forum [analysis](#) of exit poll results.

Public Still Divided on Whether Mormonism is a Christian Religion

	November 2011			December 2012		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
<i>Is Mormonism a Christian religion?</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total non-Mormon	51	32	17=100	53	30	17=100
Protestant	46	37	16=100	48	34	17=100
White evangelical	39	47	14=100	44	40	16=100
White mainline	62	24	13=100	65	22	13=100
Catholic	54	27	18=100	59	22	18=100
White Catholic	59	25	17=100	64	21	15=100
Unaffiliated	56	30	14=100	57	30	13=100
<i>Party ID</i>						
Rep/lean Rep	52	34	14=100	54	32	13=100
Dem/lean Dem	54	30	16=100	54	28	18=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q83. Based on non-Mormons. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

CAMPAIGN 2012 AND LEARNING ABOUT ROMNEY

Awareness of Romney's faith rose over the course of the 2012 campaign. Two-thirds of adults (65%) correctly identify Romney as a Mormon, up from half (51%) in July of this year and about four-in-ten (39%) one year ago.

White Protestants – both mainline and evangelical – as well as white Catholics are somewhat more likely than others in the general public to know that Romney is a Mormon.

Awareness of Romney's faith also tends to be higher among Republicans and independents who lean Republican than among Democrats and independents who lean Democratic (75% vs. 62%).

More Know Romney's Religion

<i>What is Mitt Romney's religion?</i>	Nov 2011	Mar 2012	July 2012	Dec 2012
	%	%	%	%
Mormon	39	48	51	65
Other	9	9	11	8
Don't know	<u>52</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>27</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q79. Based on total. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Awareness of Romney's Religion

<i>What is Mitt Romney's religion?</i>	Mormon	Other	DK
	%	%	%
Total	65	8	27=100
Protestant	67	8	25=100
White evangelical	72	6	22=100
White mainline	71	6	23=100
Catholic	59	10	31=100
White Catholic	77	6	18=100
Unaffiliated	68	8	24=100
<i>Party ID</i>			
Rep/lean Rep	75	7	18=100
Dem/lean Dem	62	10	28=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 5-9, 2012. Q79. Based on total. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW FORUM ON RELIGION & PUBLIC LIFE
DECEMBER 2012 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
December 5-9, 2012
N=1,503

QUESTIONS 1-4, 6, 8-17, 30-32, 40-41, 43, 46-49, 51-52, 60, 64-66, 89-91 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED OR HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTION 5, 7, 18-29, 33-39, 42, 44-45, 50, 53-59, 61-63, 67-78, 84-85

ASK ALL:

Next,

Q.79 Do you happen to know if Mitt Romney is Protestant, Catholic, Mormon, Jewish, Muslim, atheist, agnostic, or some other religion? **[INTERVIEWERS: IF R SAYS "MULTIPLE FAITHS/ALL OF THE ABOVE," RECORD AS "8-SOME OTHER RELIGION" AND RECORD VERBATIM RESPONSE]**

Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>		Jun 28-Jul 9 <u>2012</u>	Mar 7-11 <u>2012</u>	Nov 9-14 <u>2011</u>
65	Mormon	51	48	39
4	Catholic	5	3	3
1	Protestant	3	2	3
*	Jewish	*	1	*
*	Muslim	1	*	1
*	Atheist	*	*	*
0	Agnostic	*	*	*
1	Some other religion	*	0	0
1	Christian (VOL.)	1	1	1
26	Don't know (VOL.)	37	42	51
1	Refused (VOL.)	1	1	1

ASK ALL:

Now thinking about the Mormon religion, also known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints...

Q.80 How much would you say you know about the Mormon religion and its practices? **[READ IN ORDER]**

Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>		Nov 9-14 <u>2011</u>	Aug <u>2007</u> ³
12	A great deal	14	11
38	Some	36	38
30	Not very much	28	32
20	Nothing at all	21	19
*	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	1	*

³ In August 2007, question began "Now thinking about Mormonism, also known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints...."

ASK ALL:

Q.81 Please tell me what one word best describes your impression of the Mormon religion. Tell me just the one best word that comes to mind. **[OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW". ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE]**

Dec 5-9 2012		Nov 9-14 2011		Aug 2007	
70	Cult	100	Cult	73	Family/Family values
51	Good/Good people	57	Family/Family values	60	Cult
45	Family/Family values	55	Different	56	Polygamy/Bigamy
29	Faith/Faithful	49	Polygamy/Bigamy	36	Different
27	Different	45	Good/Good people	34	Dedicated
24	Devout/Devoted	35	Strict/Restrictive	32	Devout/Devoted
23	Conservative	34	Conservative	31	Good/Good people
23	Polygamy/Bigamy	28	Dedicated	30	Strict/Restrictive
22	Christian	25	Christian	24	Faith/Faithful
21	Strict/Restrictive	24	Confused/Confusing	19	Utah
19	Dedicated	19	Devout/Devoted	16	Religious
18	Religion	19	Faith/Faithful	15	Confused/Confusing
17	OK	18	Strange	15	False
15	Weird				Multiple marriages/ Multiple wives
14	Honest	17	Honest	15	Multiple wives
13	Crazy	17	Interesting	14	Conservative
			Multiple marriages/ Multiple wives		
12	Confused/Confusing	17	Multiple wives	12	Misguided
12	Nice	15	OK	12	OK
10	Religious	14	Friendly	9	Christian
10	Strange	14	Misguided	9	Committed/Commitment
9	False	14	Utah	8	Belief/Believers
9	Kind	13	False	8	True
9	Multiple marriages/ Multiple wives	12	Crazy	8	Weird
9	Utah	10	Odd	8	Pushy
8	Interesting	10	Religion	8	Sincere
8	Non-Christian	9	Peaceful		
8	Sincere	9	True		
7	Caring	9	Wrong		
7	Control/Controlling	8	Acceptable		
7	Fair	8	Belief/Believers		
7	Fanatical	8	Hypocrite		
7	Helpful	8	Nice		
7	Peaceful	8	Misunderstood		
7	Secretive	8	Religious		
		8	Weird		
		7	Fake		
		7	Favorable		
		7	Strong		
536	Other	695	Other	521	Other
383	Don't Know/Refused	541	Don't Know/Refused	388	Don't Know/Refused
[N=1503]		[N=2001]		[N=1461]	

NOTE: The numbers listed represent the number of respondents who offered each response; the numbers are not percentages. Based on first mention only.

ASK IF R IS NOT A MORMON (RELIG≠3):

Q.82 From what you know, do you think that the Mormon religion and your own [IF R HAS A RELIGION OTHER THAN MORMONISM (RELIG=1-2, 4-8, 11, 13-14 OR {RELIG=99 AND CHR=1}): religion; IF R IS ATHEIST, AGNOSTIC, NOTHING IN PARTICULAR OR DK & NOT CHRISTIAN (RELIG=9, 10, 12 OR {RELIG=99 AND CHR=2, 9}): beliefs] have a lot in common, or do you think that the Mormon religion and your [religion/beliefs] are very different?

BASED ON TOTAL:

Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>		Jun 28-Jul 9 <u>2012</u>	Nov 9-14 <u>2011</u>	Aug <u>2007</u>
24	A lot in common	23	22	23
60	Very different	60	64	63
14	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	16	12	13
2	Respondent is Mormon	2	2	2

ASK IF R IS NOT A MORMON (RELIG≠3):

Q.83 Based on what you have read or heard about Mormons, do you think their religion is a Christian religion, or do you think it is not a Christian religion?

BASED ON TOTAL:

Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>		Jun 28-Jul 9 <u>2012</u>	Nov 9-14 <u>2011</u>	Aug <u>2007</u>
52	Yes, their religion is a Christian religion	49	51	51
29	No, their religion is not a Christian religion	31	31	31
17	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	18	16	17
2	Respondent is Mormon	2	2	2

ASK ALL:

Q.86 How much, if anything, would you say you learned about the Mormon religion over the course of the 2012 presidential campaign? [READ]

Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>	
3	A great deal
13	Some
32	Not very much
50	Nothing at all
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

RANDOMIZE Q.87 AND Q.88**ASK ALL:**

Q.87 Do you happen to know when the Mormon religion was founded? [READ IN ORDER]

Dec 5-9 <u>2012</u>		Pew Forum May 19-Jun 4 <u>2010</u>
3	Before the year 1200 A.D.	5
9	Between 1200 and 1800 A.D.	10
43	Sometime after 1800 A.D.	44
44	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	41

RANDOMIZE Q.87 AND Q.88**ASK ALL:**

Q.88 Just as far as you know ... The Book of Mormon tells the story of Jesus Christ appearing to people in what area of the world? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

		<i>Pew Forum</i>
Dec 5-9		May 19-Jun 4
<u>2012</u>		<u>2010</u>
43	The Americas	40
22	Middle East	25
2	Asia	3
33	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	32