



April 5, 2018
A CONTEST WITH A PRIZE

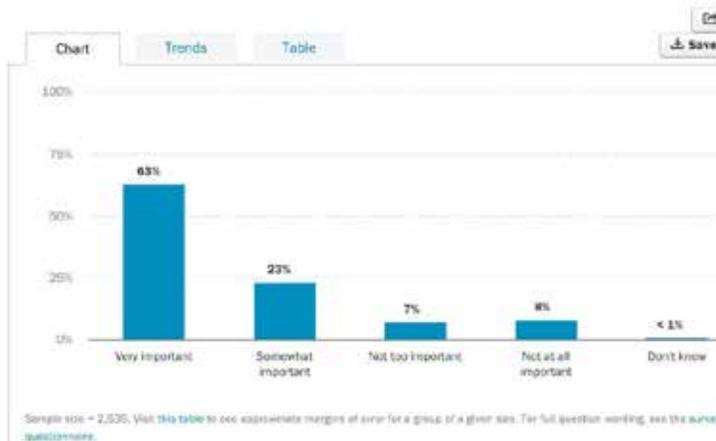
Dear Gathering Grown-ups,

Today we'd like to announce a contest!

First, let me give you a little back ground. The stereotype is that everyone in Texas is a church going Christian. This is not entirely true. The Pew Research Center (<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/texas>) claims that 86% of Texans claim religious either very important or somewhat important in their lives. However...

Importance of religion in one's life among adults in Texas

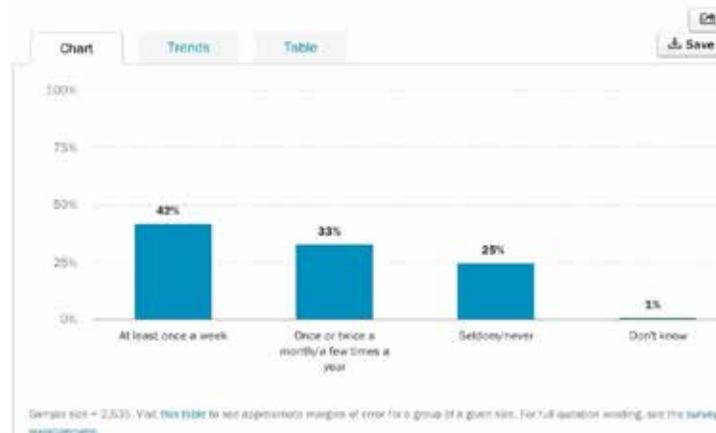
% of adults in Texas who say religion is...



... in Texas actual worship attendance is a little lower. But we can also see that...

Attendance at religious services among adults in Texas

% of adults in Texas who attend religious services...



Those attending worship are mostly evangelical and only 13% come from all the Mainline Protestant denomination combined. Even so only...

Religious composition of adults in Texas

Christian	77%
Evangelical Protestant	31%
Mainline Protestant	11%
Historically Black Protestant	6%
Catholic	23%
Mormon	1%
Orthodox Christian	< 1%
Jehovah's Witness	1%
Other Christian	1%
Non-Christian Faiths	4%
Jewish	1%
Muslim	1%
Buddhist	1%
Hindu	< 1%
Other World Religions	< 1%
Other Faiths	1%
Unaffiliated (religious "nones")	18%
Atheist	2%
Agnostic	3%
Nothing in particular	13%

%0.44 percent of Texans are ELCA Lutheran in 2010.

Religious Body	Adherents		Percent of Population	
	Year	2010	2000	
1. Catholic Church		4,673,500	18.59	20.95
2. Southern Baptist Convention		3,722,194	14.80	16.88
3. Non-Denominational Christian		1,546,542	6.15	—
4. United Methodist Church		1,122,736	4.46	4.90
5. Muslim estimate		421,972	1.68	0.55
6. Church of Christ		351,129	1.40	1.81
7. LDS (Mormons)		296,141	1.18	0.75
8. Assembly of God		275,565	1.10	1.09
9. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)		155,046	0.62	0.86
10. Episcopal Church		148,439	0.59	0.85
11. Lutheran—Missouri Synod		132,508	0.53	0.67
12. Lutheran—E.L.C.A.		111,647	0.44	0.74
Unclaimed by any faith		10,103,455	40.18	38.25

(<https://texasalmanac.com/topics/religion/religious-affiliation-texas>)

What this means is that whenever a server, housekeeper, member of the community you encounter during a service project asks, "What are you doing here?" and you answer, "We are part of the Lutheran Youth Gathering," their next question will be "what's a Lutheran?" Can each member of your Gathering Group answer that question? More importantly can they answer without using "church words?"

To find out, I am announcing a contest for the best and most understandable answer to the question "What's a Lutheran?" The winning answer will be short, about 25 words, so that it could be printed on a business card and could be easily understood by someone who has never been to church and who may be learning English. The use of church jargon like "Missional" or unfamiliar terms like "justification, transubstantiation, Eucharist, Epistemology, homoletic, and theology, will not be accepted. Of course, we are looking for original work.

One entry will be selected as the winner by a panel of judges and then every member of the winner's congregation attending the Gathering will receive a customized ELCA Youth Gathering luggage tag!

Please submit your entries to Kathy Liddle at Liddlek@neiasynod.org by May 1, 2018.

Please note that this email is being sent to the Primary Leader of each group registered for the ELCA Youth Gathering from Northeastern Iowa. Please share this email with other adult leaders, parents, and youth as you see fit.

Your Gathering Partner in Ministry,



Pastor Mark A. Anderson