Spreading the Word: How Americans Share Their Faith

Americans differ greatly in the degree to which they share their religious faith. Some are willing to share their faith with those who are interested, while others keep their beliefs to themselves. Still others go from door to door, sharing their views with everyone who will listen.

In this module, we explore how Americans share their faith with others, and look at some of the general differences by race, gender, and religious tradition.

Open your web browser and go to the homepage for the Association of Religion Data Archives (www.theARDA.com).

Locate and select the data file for the Baylor Religion Survey, Wave II (2007) - Instructional Dataset. If you need assistance locating a data file on the ARDA, click here.

1. According to the information provided on the ARDA, who funded this study?

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2. In all, how many people were interviewed for this survey? (Hint: People are referred to as “cases.”)

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3. What method was used to gather data for this study?

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Now, using the codebook for this study, answer the following questions. If you need assistance using the codebook to navigate a data file, click here.
4. How many Americans reported witnessing or sharing their faith with friends in the past month (question Q14e, WTNSSFR)? (Hint: Using the search tab, search for “witness”.)

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5. What percent of Americans reported witnessing or sharing their faith with strangers in the past month (question Q14f, WTNSSST)? Was the percentage more or less than you thought it would be?

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Now go back to the first question and click on the link to “Analyze results.” Here you will find several tables describing how responses varied by gender, race, religion, and several other factors.

6. According to the information provided, are men or women more likely to report having witnessed or shared their faith with their friends in the past month? How about with strangers?

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Research shows that evangelizing can also vary by church attendance. Let’s examine how evangelizing varies according to regular church attendance.
7. Using the data in the *Baylor Religion Survey, 2007 - Instructional Dataset*, complete the following tables and answer the related questions:

**Evangelizing Friends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than once a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a year</th>
<th>Several times a year</th>
<th>1-3 times a month</th>
<th>About weekly</th>
<th>Weekly or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not at all</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1–2 times</td>
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<tr>
<td>3–4 times</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 or more times</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Evangelizing Strangers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than once a year</th>
<th>Once or twice a year</th>
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8. Was there any difference between those willing to share their faith with friends and those willing to share their faith with strangers? What are some explanations for what you found?

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Evangelizing can also differ according to educational attainment.

9. Using data on the ARDA, complete the following tables and answer the related questions:

Evangelizing friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No high school diploma</th>
<th>High School graduate</th>
<th>Some college</th>
<th>Trade/vocational training</th>
<th>College graduate</th>
<th>Postgraduate work/degree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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10. What kind of relationship did you find between education and evangelizing? What are some possible explanations for this trend?

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Researchers sometimes find that religious behaviors differ by age and gender. Next, we’re going to see how sharing one’s faith differs by these characteristics.
11. When you analyze the results for Q14e and Q14f, do young adults (ages 18-30) appear to be more or less likely to share their beliefs than older adults (ages 45-64)?

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12. Are males or females more likely to share their faith?

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