

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?

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

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

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”.)

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?

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?

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

	Less than once a year	Once or twice a year	Several times a year	1-3 times a month	About weekly	Weekly or more
not at all						
1-2 times						
3-4 times						
5 or more times						

Evangelizing Strangers

	Less than once a year	Once or twice a year	Several times a year	1-3 times a month	About weekly	Weekly or more
not at all						
1-2 times						
3-4 times						
5 or more times						

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?

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

	No high school diploma	High school graduate	Some college	Trade/vocational training	College graduate	Postgraduate work/degree
not at all						
1–2 times						
3–4 times						
5 or more times						

Evangelizing strangers

	No high school diploma	High school graduate	Some college	Trade/vocational training	College graduate	Postgraduate work/degree
not at all						
1–2 times						
3–4 times						
5 or more times						

10. What kind of relationship did you find between education and evangelizing? What are some possible explanations for this trend?

Now let's look at a more recently collected dataset. Go to the *U.S. Religious Landscape Study, 2014* in the Data Archive.

Click on the Codebook and search (by pressing Ctrl+F) for the word “share”. There should be two survey questions that include this word, but only the first pertains to believers sharing their faith with non-believers.

11. How is this question different to the two questions asked about sharing faith in the *Baylor Religion Survey*?

12. Click on “Analyze results”. Which characteristics (e.g. Age, Sex, Race, Political Party, etc.) seem to be related to how often a religious person might share their faith with a non-believer? What do those relationships look like? (For example, are people with higher or lower household incomes more likely to share their faith with non-believers?) Write a sentence or two about each of the relationships you see.

Now go to the Measurement Wizard (www.theARDA.com/MaWizard) and click on Single-Item Measures. We are interested in measures relating to sharing one’s faith (another word for this is ‘proselytization’), so do a Ctrl+F search for ‘proselytization’ and click on the link. This will take you to a page that has the individual questions from all of the ARDA datasets that have to do with sharing one’s faith.

13. Choose 4 out of the 10 countries included in the Spirit and Power: Survey of Pentecostals (Hint: do a Ctrl+F search for the variable named “Share_F”) plus the U.S., and compare the results by filling out the below table with the **percent** of responses in each category.

Country name→	U.S.				
Every day	10.1%				
More than once a week	7.4%				
Once a week	10.0%				
At least once a month	13.1%				
Several times a year	10.8%				
Less often	13.1%				
Never	30.7%				

14. How do Pentecostals in the U.S. compare with Pentecostals from other countries concerning sharing one’s faith? Why do you think this is?
