

Canadians Belief in God and attachment to religious group

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Introduction

With Easter approaching it is an opportune time to look into belief in God amongst Canadians, varying degrees of attachment (or lack thereof) to one's religious group and the relationship between the two.

When asked whether there is a God some 50% of Canadians agree (with one third strongly agreeing). This represents little change from the results of a similar ACS-Leger survey conducted in 2021.

Quebecers and British Columbians were least likely to agree that there is a God. Muslim Canadians are far more likely than others to believe there is a God as do a significant majority of Protestants and Sikhs. When asked, Buddhists and Jews were far less convinced. A markedly higher percentage of Canadians say that they believe there is a God than the share saying they are attached to their religious group (34%).

The web based survey was carried out by Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies between February 20th and March 3rd, 2023. with 1843 Canadians. A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparative purposes a probability sample of 1,544 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

Narrow majority of Canadians believe there is a God but Quebecers and British Columbians are more divided over the answer

There is a God - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?							
	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Strongly agree	32.8%	27.6%	39.3%	47.5%	36.9%	19.3%	40.3%
Somewhat agree	18.5%	16.0%	14.6%	10.2%	19.1%	23.8%	16.9%
Somewhat disagree	8.5%	8.6%	8.3%	11.9%	8.0%	10.0%	4.0%
Strongly disagree	18.4%	23.0%	18.4%	7.6%	14.8%	24.8%	18.5%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	21.8%	24.9%	19.4%	22.9%	21.2%	22.1%	20.2%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Belief in God has remained stable between 2021 and 2023

I believe in God/There is a God - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?			
	May 3-7, 2019	Nov 19-21, 2021	March 13-20, 2023
TOTAL AGREE	59%	53%	51%
Strongly agree	36%	32%	33%
Somewhat agree	23%	22%	18%
TOTAL DISAGREE	28%	35%	28%
Somewhat disagree	10%	9%	9%
Strongly disagree	18%	26%	19%
I don't know/ prefer not to answer	13%	12%	21%

Canadians over 55 more likely than those under 55 to agree that there is a God

	There is a God						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	>= 75
Strongly agree	36.3%	22.4%	34.4%	31.4%	37.9%	32.5%	39.1%
Somewhat agree	14.0%	15.7%	14.1%	20.6%	20.5%	24.3%	19.5%
Somewhat disagree	13.4%	14.7%	5.2%	11.8%	4.7%	4.6%	6.0%
Strongly disagree	16.8%	26.3%	23.9%	18.5%	14.6%	12.5%	12.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	19.6%	20.8%	22.3%	17.8%	22.4%	26.2%	22.6%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Majority of anglophone Canadians agree there is a God while francophones are far more divided

	There is a God	
	French	English
Strongly agree	15.6%	35.7%
Somewhat agree	22.5%	17.1%
Somewhat disagree	10.7%	8.3%
Strongly disagree	26.0%	17.1%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	25.2%	21.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Immigrants are far more likely than non-immigrants to agree that there is a God

	There is a God	
	Non-Immigrant	Immigrant
Strongly agree	27.7%	49.3%
Somewhat agree	19.2%	16.5%
Somewhat disagree	9.0%	6.8%
Strongly disagree	20.9%	10.1%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	23.1%	17.2%
	100.0%	100.0%

Muslim Canadians are far more likely than others to believe there is a God as do a significant majority of Protestants and Sikhs: When asked, Buddhists and Jews are much less certain

	There is a God - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?					Total
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know / I prefer not to answer	
Catholic	39.8%	28.0%	6.9%	5.5%	19.8%	100.0%
Protestant	58.3%	25.7%	1.4%	3.3%	11.2%	100.0%
Muslim	88.9%	5.6%	1.9%		3.7%	100.0%
Buddhist	17.4%	17.4%	26.1%	13.0%	26.1%	100.0%
Jewish	26.1%	13.0%	4.3%	21.7%	34.8%	100.0%
Hindu	57.6%	21.2%	3.0%		18.2%	100.0%
Sikh	46.2%	30.8%	23.1%			100.0%

Attachment to Religious Group



Majority of Canadians say they are not attached to their religious group

My religious group	Canada	Man	Woman	18-34	35-54	55+
NET ATTACHED	34%	34%	34%	32%	32%	36%
Very attached	16%	17%	16%	18%	16%	16%
Somewhat attached	17%	17%	18%	14%	16%	21%
NET NOT ATTACHED	58%	59%	56%	55%	60%	58%
Not very attached	18%	19%	17%	16%	16%	21%
Not attached at all	40%	41%	39%	39%	44%	38%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	8%	7%	10%	13%	8%	6%

Majorities across regions say they are not attached to their religious group but allophones and immigrants are have much higher rates of attachment to their religious group

My Religious Group	Total	QC	ON	BC	AB	ATL	MB+SK	French	English	Other	Non Immigrant	Immigrant
NET ATTACHED	34%	28%	39%	26%	33%	34%	40%	26%	33%	49%	28%	53%
Very attached	16%	11%	21%	9%	17%	19%	20%	9%	16%	30%	13%	29%
Somewhat attached	17%	18%	18%	17%	16%	15%	20%	17%	17%	19%	15%	24%
NET NOT ATTACHED	58%	67%	54%	64%	53%	53%	50%	68%	57%	47%	62%	43%
Not very attached	18%	24%	17%	17%	12%	14%	19%	22%	16%	19%	18%	17%
Not attached at all	40%	43%	37%	47%	42%	39%	30%	46%	40%	28%	44%	26%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	8%	5%	7%	10%	14%	13%	10%	6%	10%	4%	10%	4%

Allophones and immigrants have much higher rates of attachment to their religious group than do English, French and non-immigrants

My Religious Group	French	English	Other	Non Immigrant	Immigrant
NET ATTACHED	26%	33%	49%	28%	53%
Very attached	9%	16%	30%	13%	29%
Somewhat attached	17%	17%	19%	15%	24%
NET NOT ATTACHED	68%	57%	47%	62%	43%
Not very attached	22%	16%	19%	18%	17%
Not attached at all	46%	40%	28%	44%	26%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	6%	10%	4%	10%	4%

Sikh and Muslim Canadians are most likely to say they are attached to their religious group as are an important majority of Jews but there is a gap between religious attachment and belief in God

	My religious group - Please tell us whether you are very attached, somewhat attached, not very attached or not at all attached to the following:					Total
	Very attached	Somewhat attached	Not very attached	Not attached at all	I don't know / I prefer not to answer	
Catholic	17.8%	28.0%	27.3%	23.5%	3.5%	100.0%
Protestant	32.4%	24.7%	24.0%	16.4%	2.5%	100.0%
Muslim	62.3%	26.4%	3.8%	7.5%		100.0%
Buddhist	13.0%	39.1%	17.4%	21.7%	8.7%	100.0%
Jewish	40.9%	31.8%	18.2%	9.1%		100.0%
Hindu	33.3%	33.3%	15.2%	15.2%	3.0%	100.0%
Sikh	76.9%	7.7%	15.4%			100.0%

A majority of Canadians saying they are 'not attached to their religious group' still believe there is a God

There is a God	My religious group - Please tell us whether you are very attached, somewhat attached, not very attached or not at all attached to the following:			
	Very attached	Somewhat attached	Not very attached	Not attached at all
Strongly agree	86.1%	56.6%	23.0%	8.3%
Somewhat agree	8.3%	30.6%	31.5%	11.8%
Somewhat disagree	1.3%	2.5%	10.6%	11.7%
Strongly disagree	0.7%	2.2%	8.8%	37.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	3.6%	8.1%	26.1%	30.4%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Most groups are more likely to say they believe in God than are attached to their religious group with the exception of Jews and Sikhs for whom attachment to religious group is more important than belief in God

	Strongly agree that there is a God	Very attached to their religious Group	Difference...
Catholic	39.8%	17.8%	22
Protestant	58.3%	32.4%	25.9
Muslim	88.9%	62.3%	26.3
Buddhist	17.4%	13.0%	4.4
Jewish	26.1%	40.9%	-14.8
Hindu	57.6%	33.3%	24.3
Sikh	46.2%	76.9%	-30.7

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