

Perceptions of Jesus, Christians & Evangelism

Research Findings by Barna Group



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



in our villages, towns & cities



Research Study Overview

Answering the Big Questions

- ❑ What do UK adults know and believe about Jesus Christ?
- ❑ What do they really think of his followers?
- ❑ How often—if ever—do Christians talk about their faith in Jesus?
- ❑ And how do both Christians and non-Christians feel about those conversations?

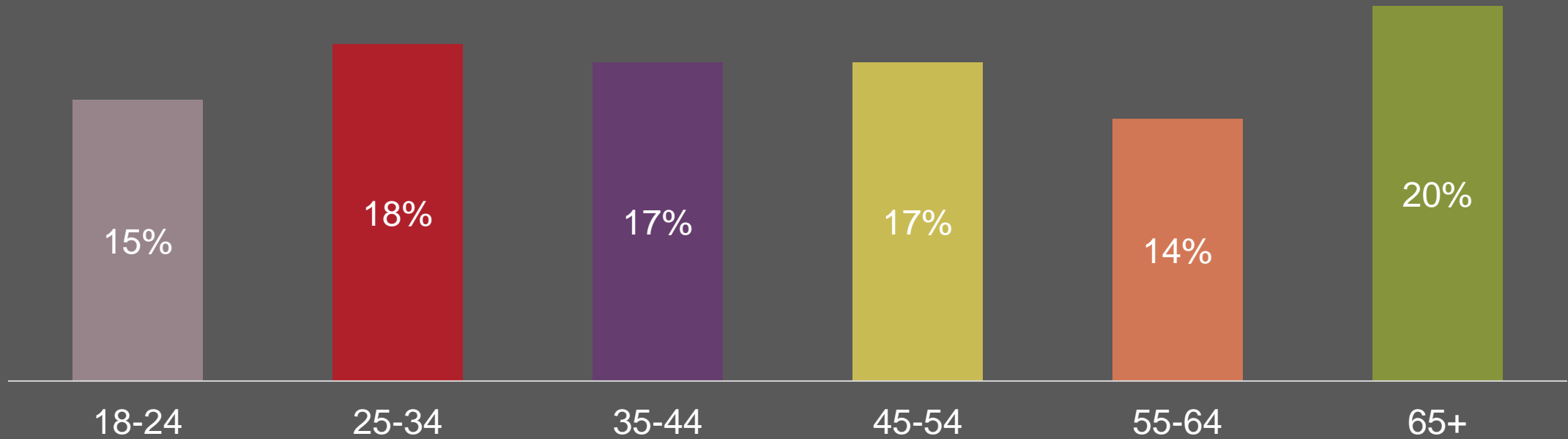
Research Study Overview

Data Collection Methodology

- ❑ A bespoke online survey among a nationally representative sample of 3,014 UK adults, plus an over sampling of 1,621 UK practising Christians.
 - Including 2,545 English adults and 1,592 English practising Christians
- ❑ The data were collected between the 12th and 29th July 2015 by ComRes.
- ❑ The national data were weighted to be representative of all UK adults aged 18+ by age, gender, region and socio-economic grade.
- ❑ The sample error on the national data is plus or minus 1.8 percent points at the 95% confidence level.
- ❑ The over sample data were weighted to be representative of all UK practising Christians by age, gender and denomination per the Church Census 2005.
- ❑ The sample error on the over sample data is plus or minus 2.4 percent points at the 95% confidence level.

Research Study Overview

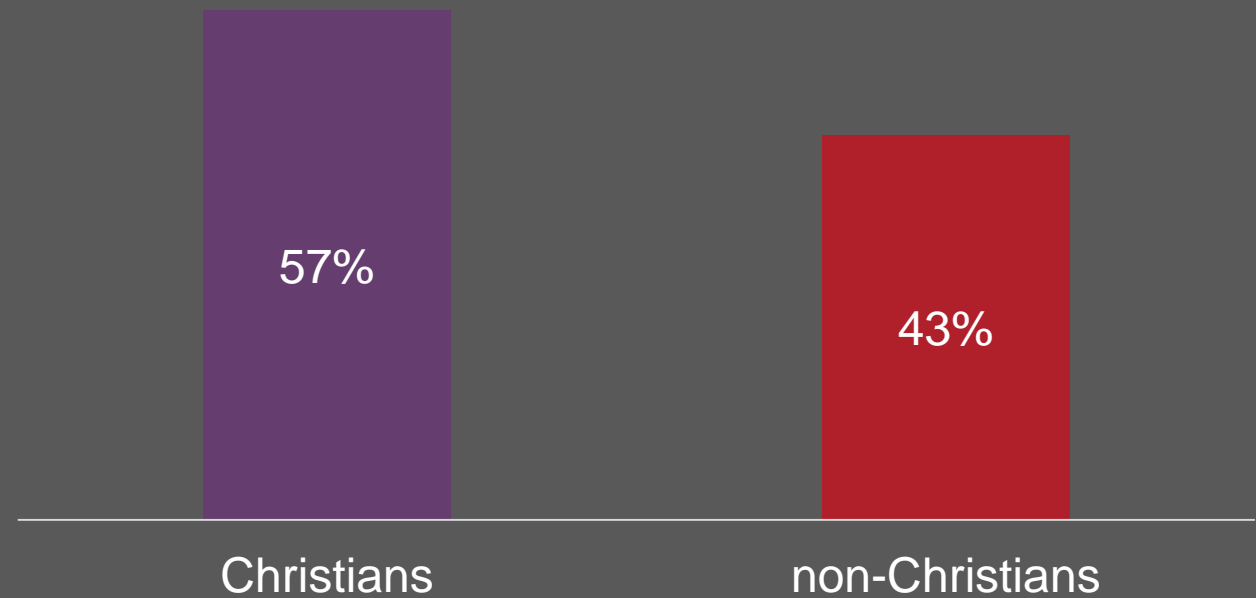
Defining the English Audience – Age Groups



Research Study Overview

Defining the English Audience

- ❑ **Self-identified Christians** say “Christian” best describes their religious faith (57%).
- ❑ **Non-Christians** chose any response other than “Christian” to best describe their religious faith (43%).



Research Study Overview

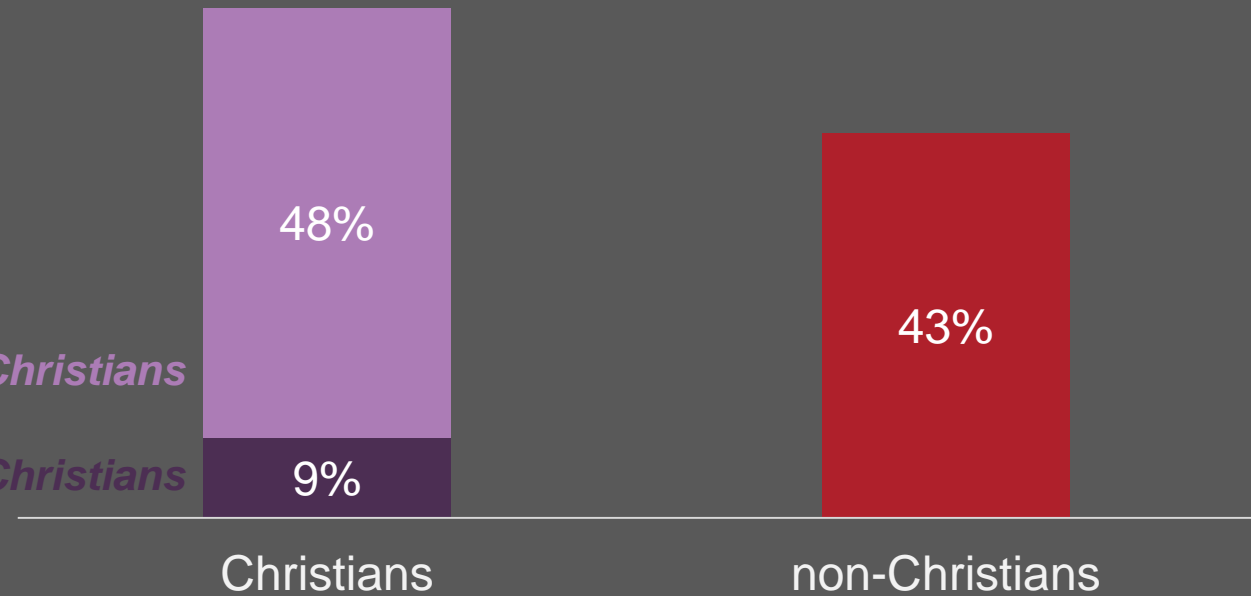
Defining the English Audience

- ***practising Christians*** identify as “Christian” but also report praying, reading the Bible and attending a church service at least monthly (9%).

Practising Christian is not specific to any denomination.

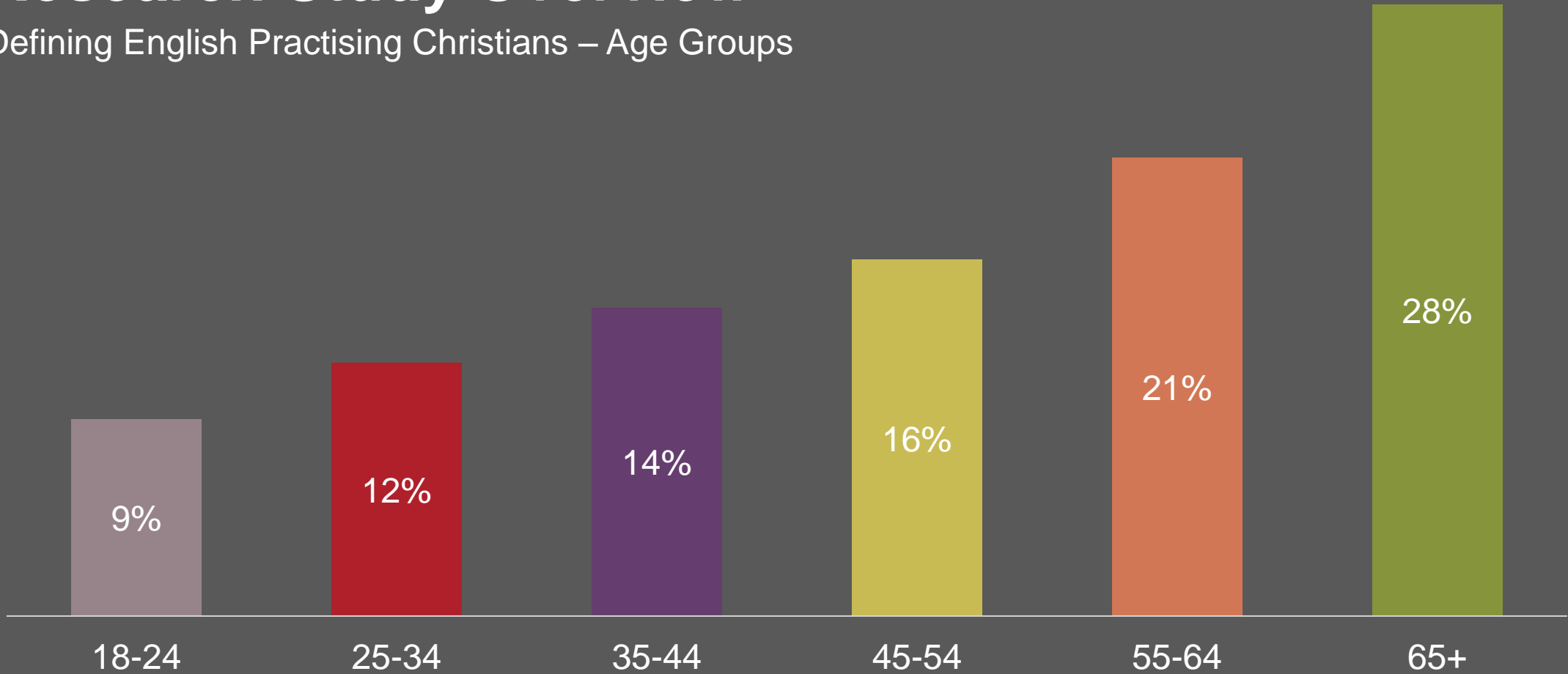
non-practising Christians

practising Christians



Research Study Overview

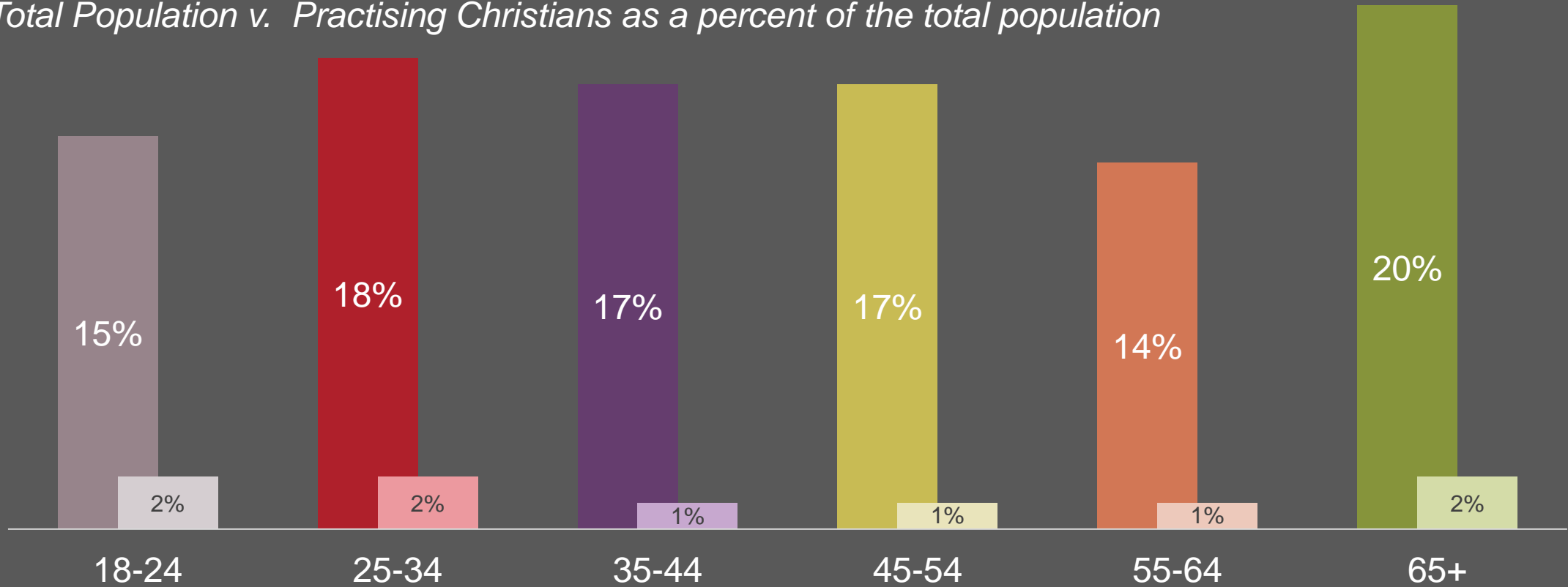
Defining English Practising Christians – Age Groups



Research Study Overview

Defining English Practising Christians – Age Groups

Total Population v. Practising Christians as a percent of the total population



**practising Christian per cents add to greater than 9% due to rounding.*

Research Study Overview

Profile of English Adults

Religious Identity	
Christian	57%
Atheist	12
Agnostic	9
Muslim	3
Hindu	2
Jewish	2
Buddhist	1
Sikh	*
Other	3
None of the above	11

	Level of Education	
	all English adults	English practising Christians
Secondary school, high school, NVQ levels 1 to 3, etc.	51%	17%
University degree or equivalent professional qualification, NVQ level 4, etc.	44	81
Still in full-time education	3	1
Don't know	1	1
Prefer not to say	1	*

* Indicates less than one-half of one percent.

Research Study Overview

Profile of UK Adults

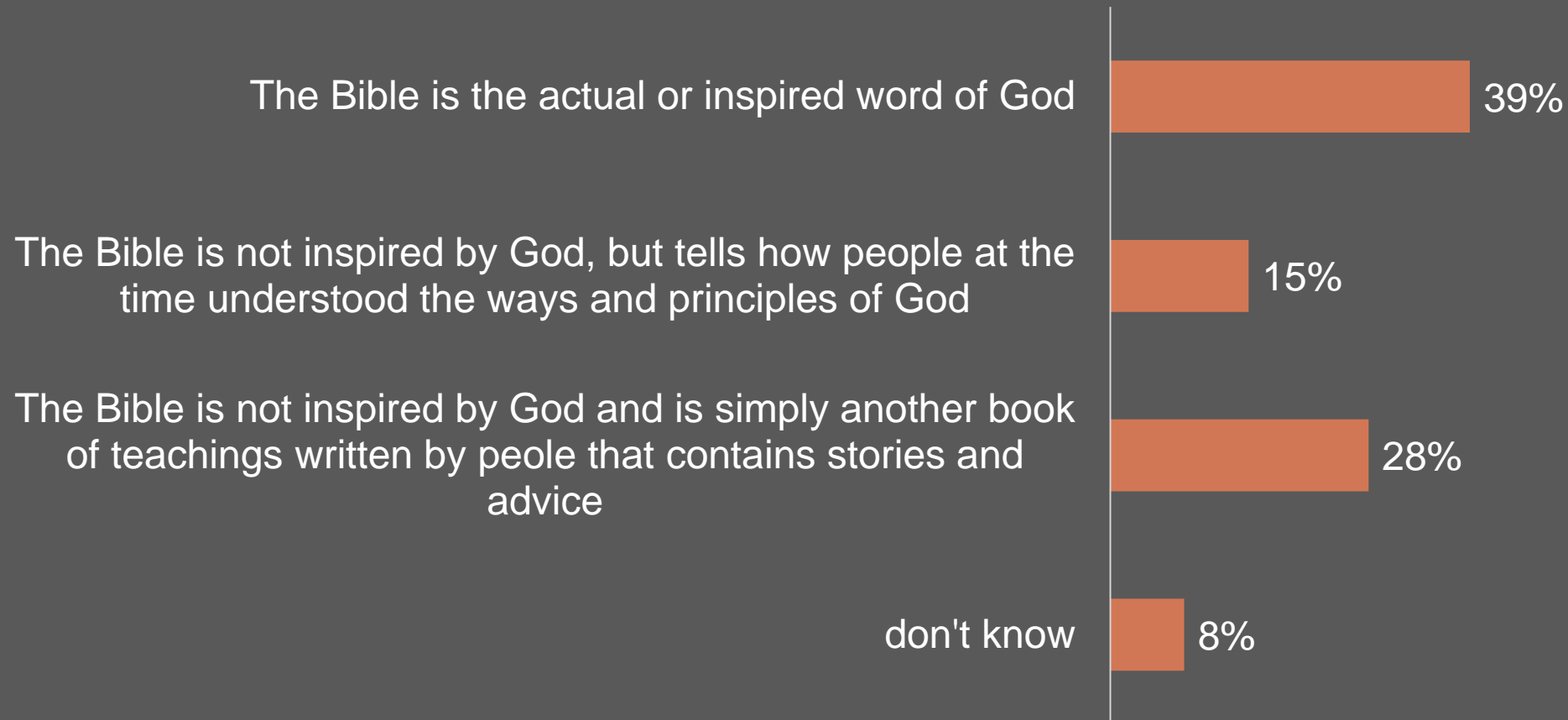
Industry / Career Sector	all	English
	English adults	practising Christians
Retired/not employed	32%	18%
Retail	8	3
Education	7	19
Health	7	10
Professional, scientific & technical	5	7
Production	5	2
Construction	5	3
Transport & storage (inc. post)	4	1

	all English adults	English practising Christians
Arts, entertainment, recreation	4%	5%
Information & communication	4	7
Accommodation/food service	2	1
Finance & insurance	3	1
Business admin & support	3	4
Public admin & defence	3	4
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	1	1
Motor trades	1	*
Wholesale	1	*
Property	1	1

* Indicates less than one-half of one percent.

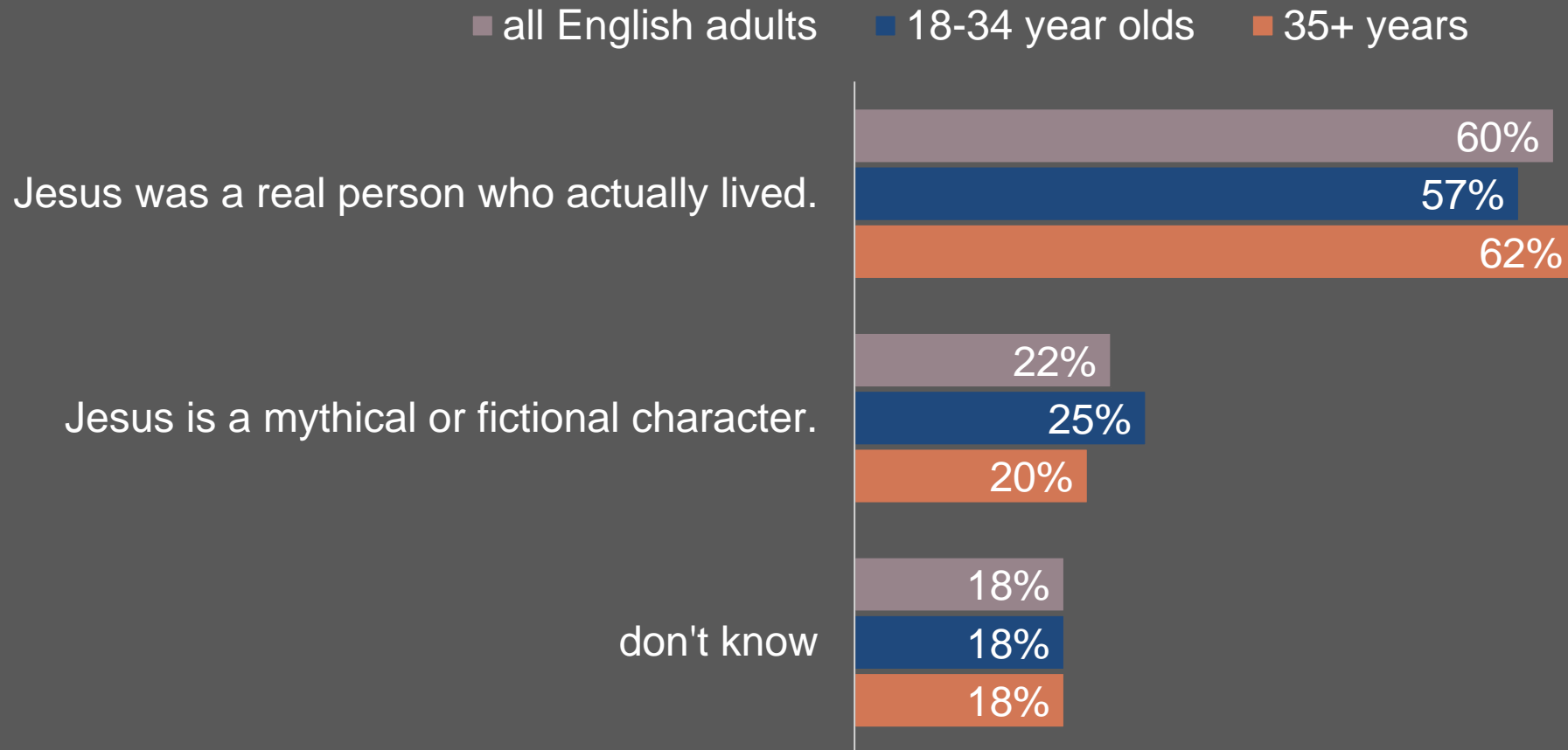
Beliefs about Jesus

2 in 5 English adults believe the Bible is God's Word.

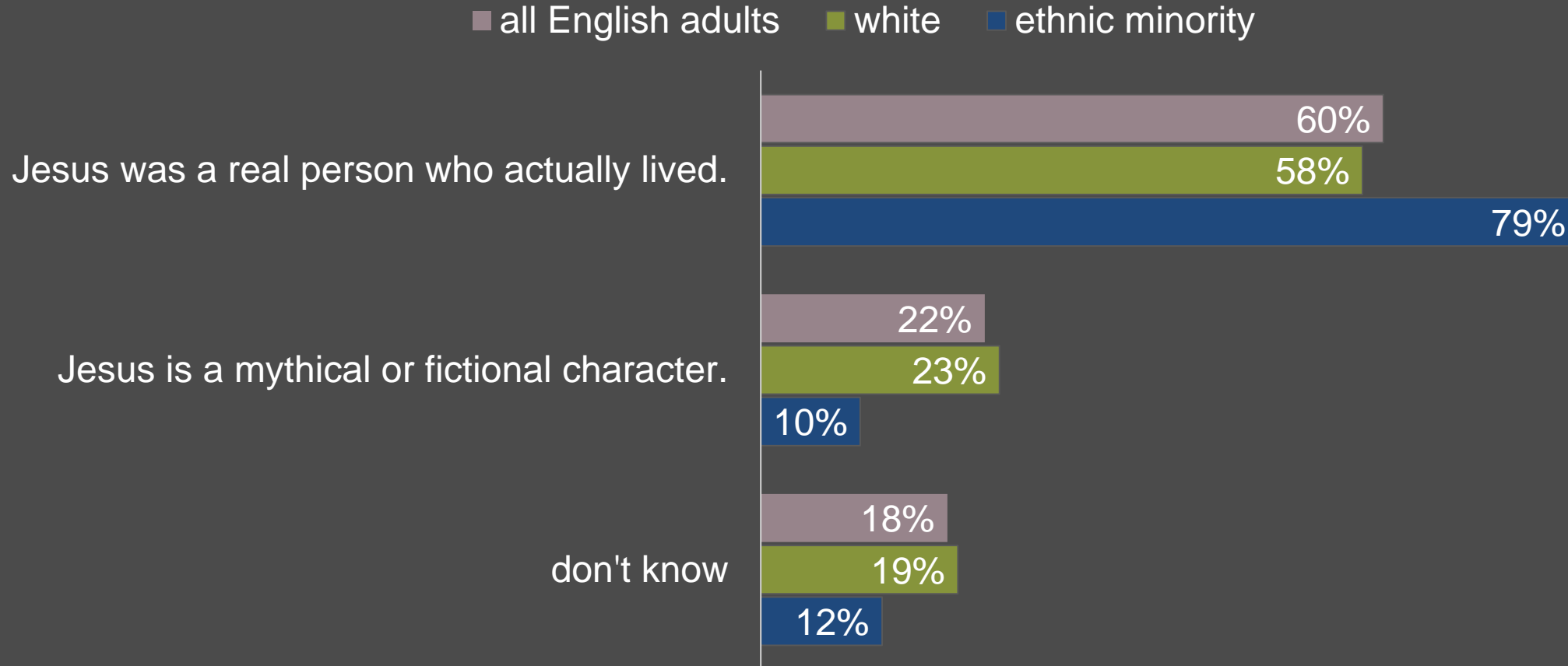


Based on earlier study of 1,000 English adults

Six in 10 English adults believe that Jesus was a real person.



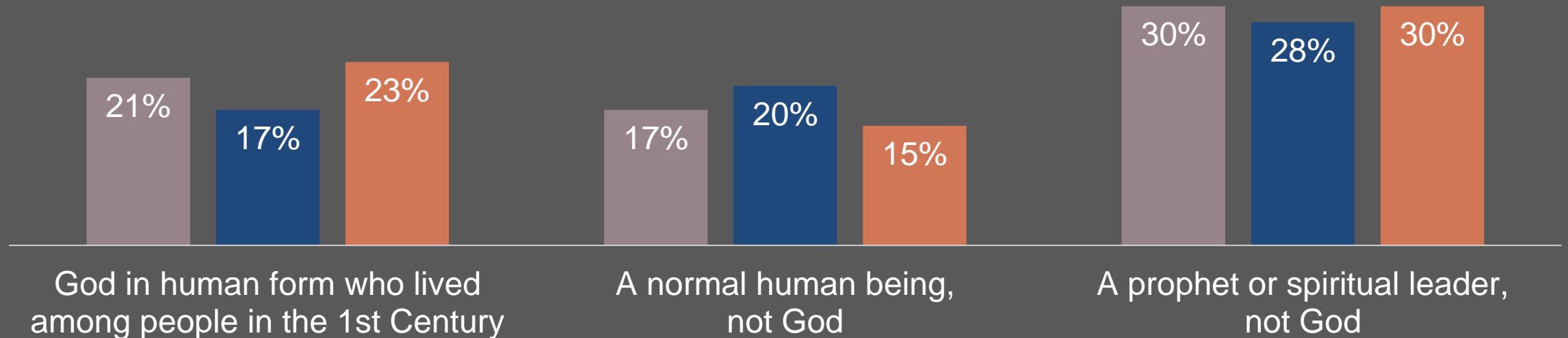
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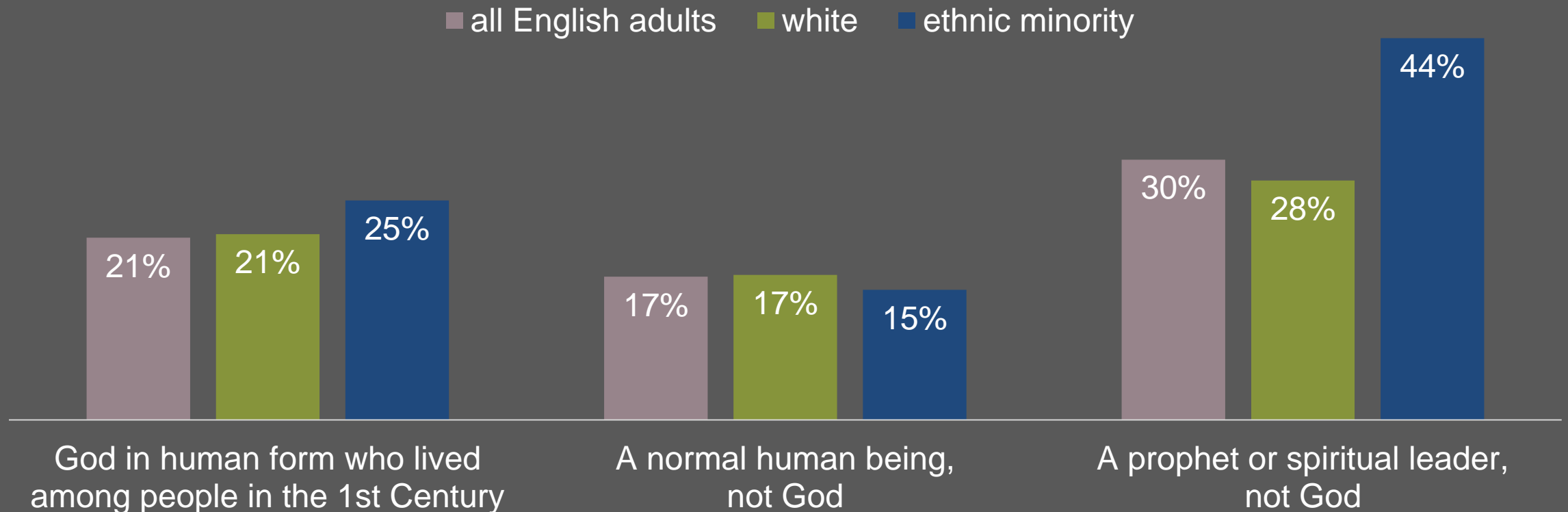
4 out of 5 Asian and Black UK adults believe Jesus was a real person.

Approximately 1 in 5 English adults believe Jesus was God in human form who lived among people in the first century.

■ all English adults ■ 18-34 year olds ■ 35+ years

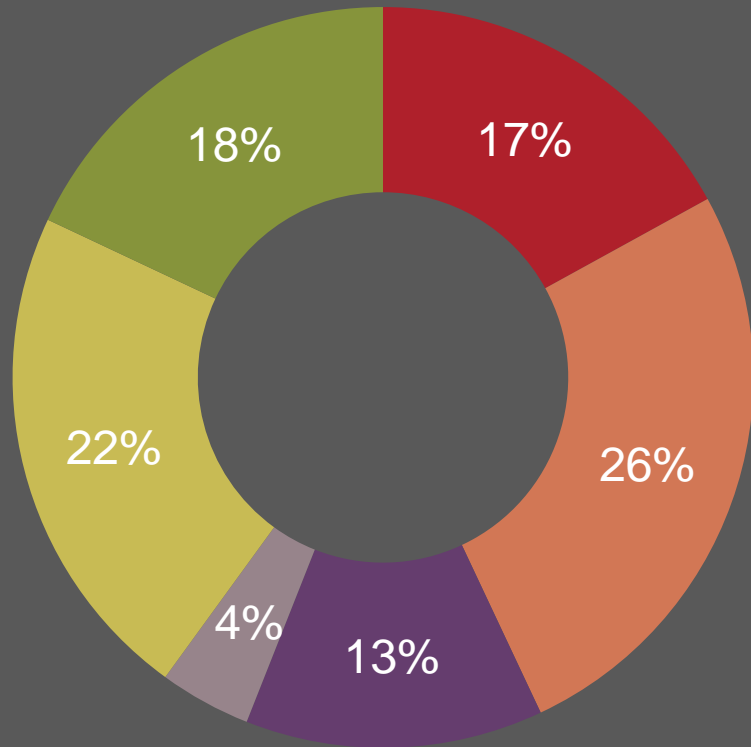


English adults are more likely to believe Jesus was a prophet or spiritual leader than God in human form.



Asian English adults are more likely to say Jesus was just a spiritual leader or prophet (51%).
Black English adults are more likely to believe in Jesus' divinity, God in human form (52%).

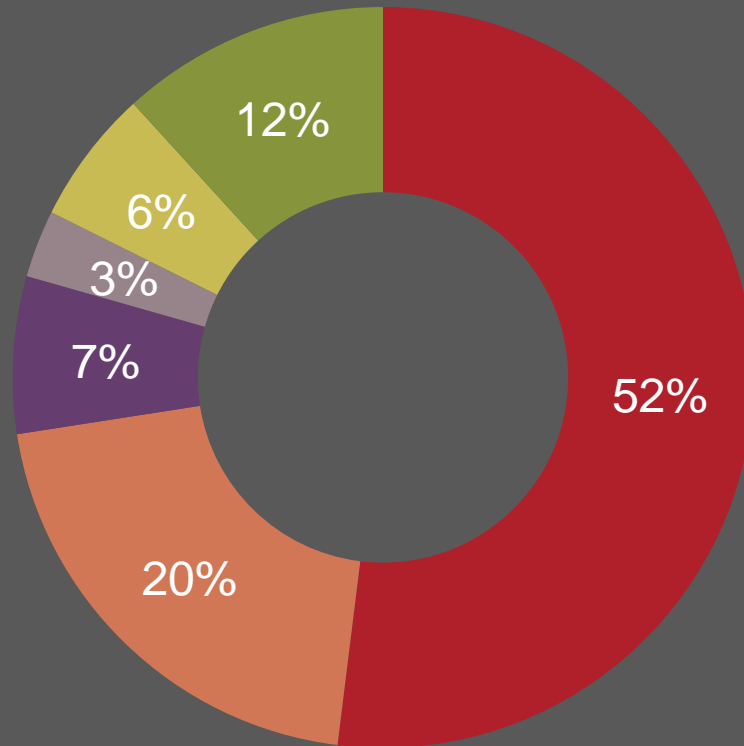
43% of all English adults believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.



- I believe the resurrection of Jesus from the dead happened word-for-word as described in the Bible
- I believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but the story in the Bible contains some content which should not be taken literally
- I do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead
- Not sure if the resurrection is true or not
- Believe Jesus is fictional
- Not sure if Jesus is real or fictional

The vast majority of black English adults believe Jesus was a real person and that he was raised from the dead.

% among Black English adults



- I believe the resurrection of Jesus from the dead happened word-for-word as described in the Bible
- I believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but the story in the Bible contains some content which should not be taken literally
- I do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead
- Not sure if the resurrection is true or not
- Believe Jesus is fictional
- Not sure if Jesus is real or fictional

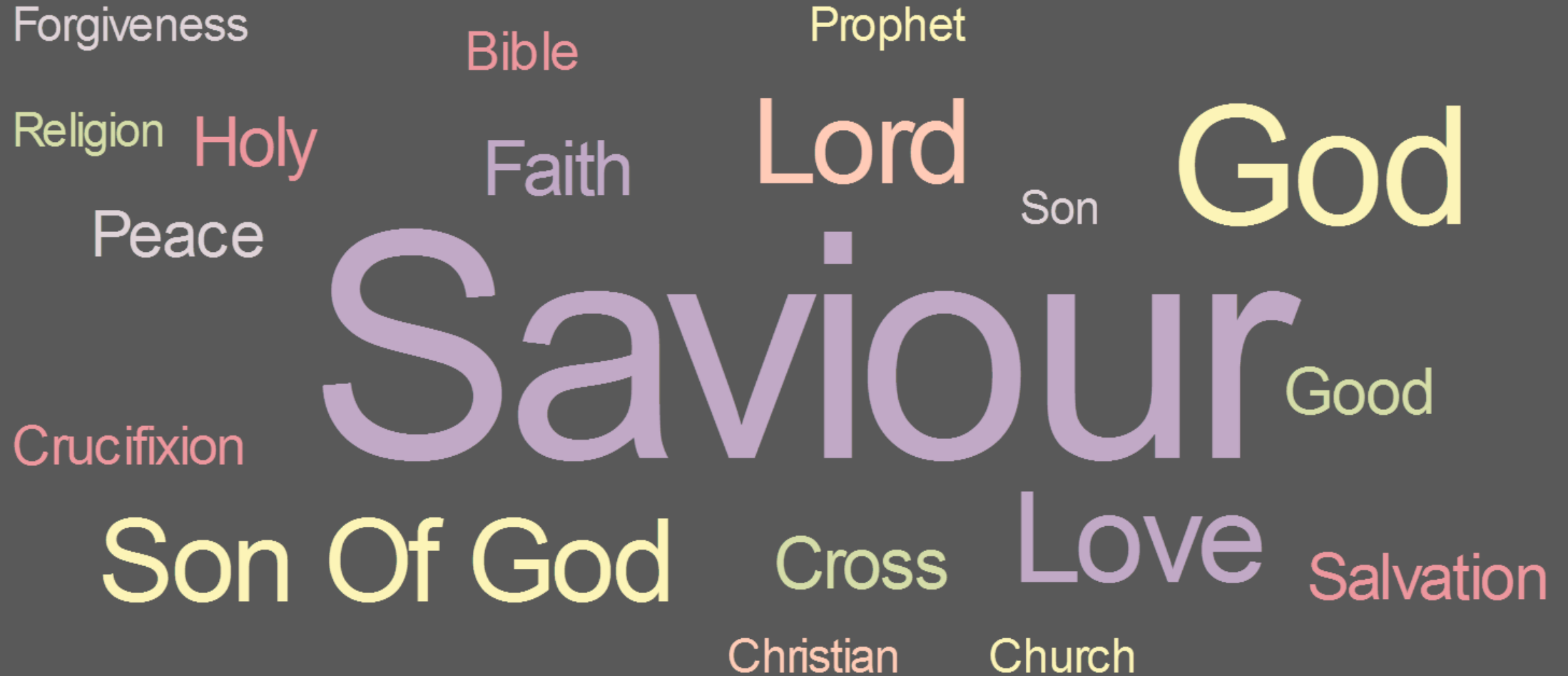
Words that come to mind among all English adults when Jesus Christ is mentioned.



Among non-Christian English adults, words that come to mind when Jesus Christ is mentioned.



Among English practising Christians, words that come to mind when Jesus Christ is mentioned.



Words chosen by English adults to describe Jesus

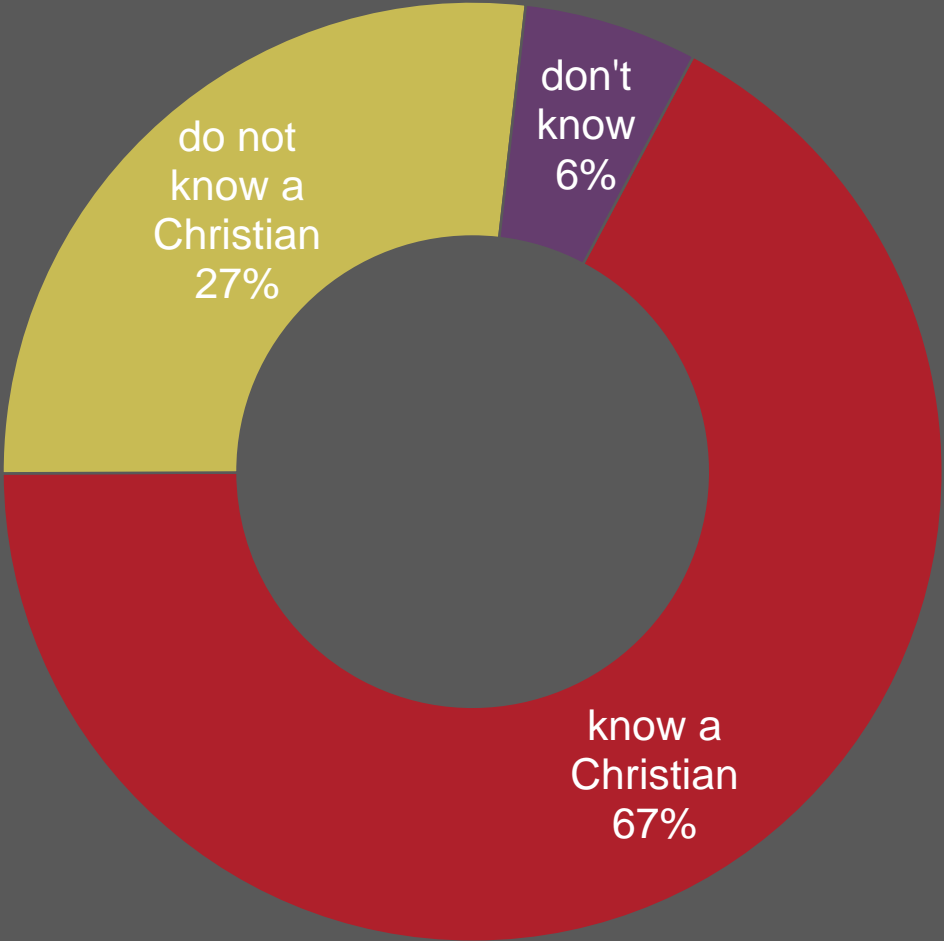
All English adults	18-34 year olds	Practising Christians	Non-Practising Christian
Spiritual, 48%	Spiritual, 42%	Loving, 93%	Loving, 58%
Loving, 47%	Loving, 42%	Wise, 88%	Spiritual, 57%
Peaceful, 46%	Leader, 41%	Inspirational, 88%	Peaceful, 54%

** respondents could choose multiple options.*



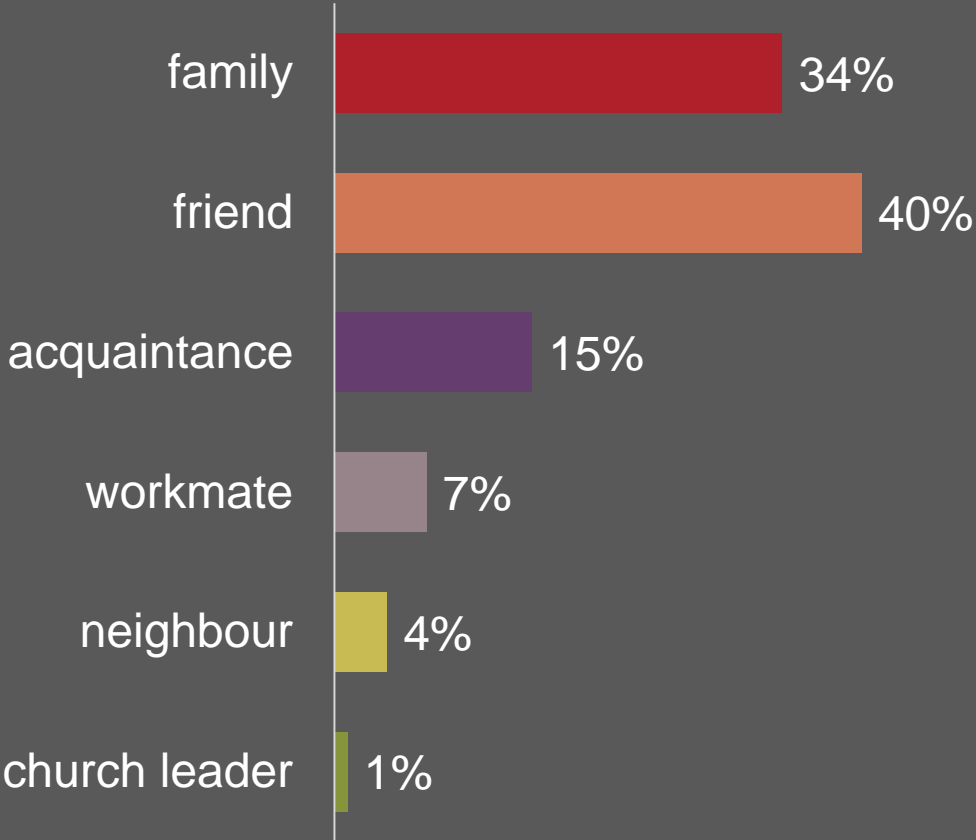
Non-Christians' Perceptions of Christians

Most English non-Christians say they know a Christian.



Relationship with Christian

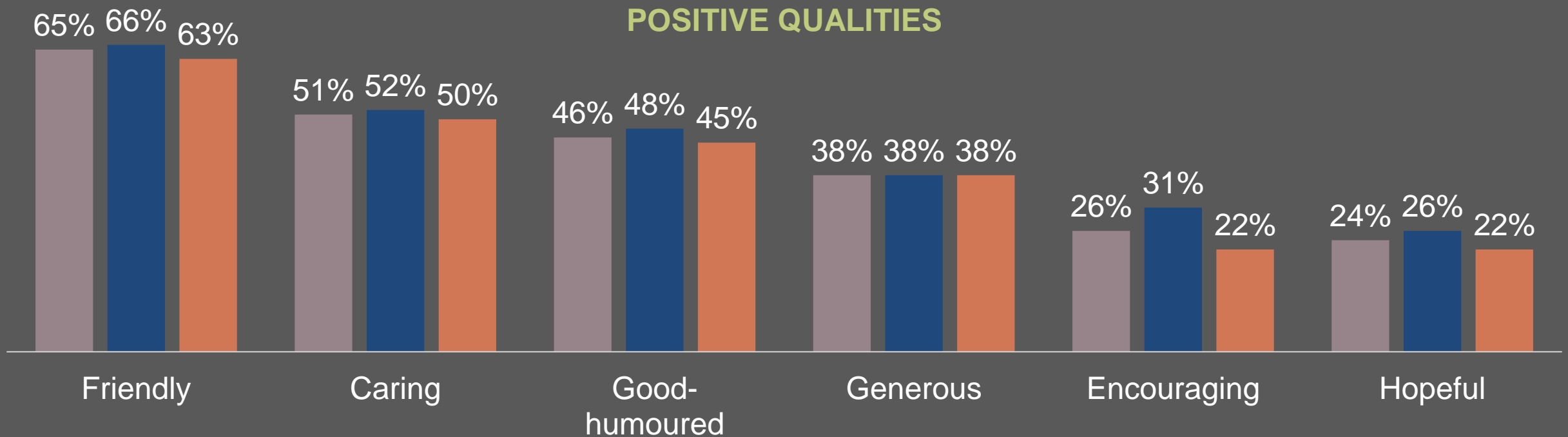
% among non-Christians who know a Christian



English non-Christians attribute more positive than negative qualities to the Christians they know.

% among English non-Christians who know a Christian

■ all English adults ■ 18-34 year olds ■ 35+ years



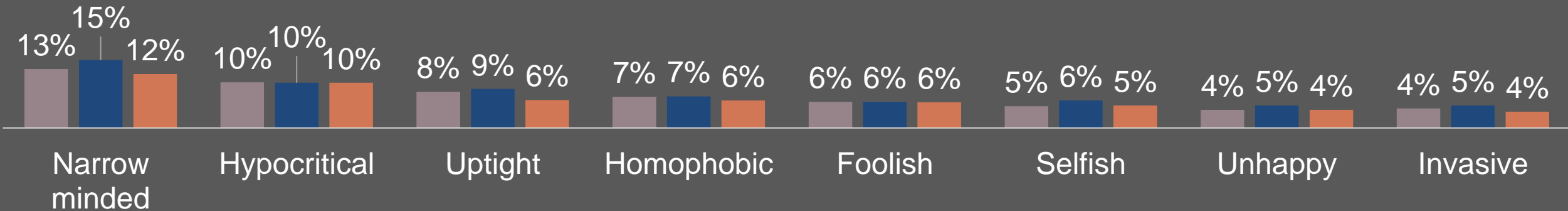
** respondents could choose multiple options.*

English non-Christians attribute more positive than negative qualities to the Christians they know.

% among English non-Christians who know a Christian

■ all English adults ■ 18-34 year olds ■ 35+ years

NEGATIVE QUALITIES



** respondents could choose multiple options.*



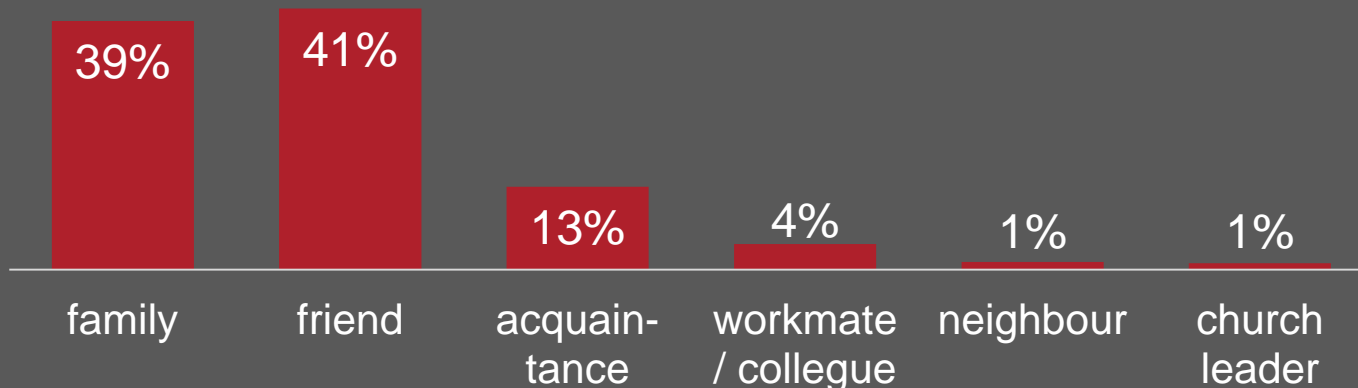
Non-Christians' Experience with Evangelism

More than half English non-Christians who know a Christian (57%) have had a conversation with them about Jesus—or 39% of all English non-Christians.

Conversations tend to be between family and friends.

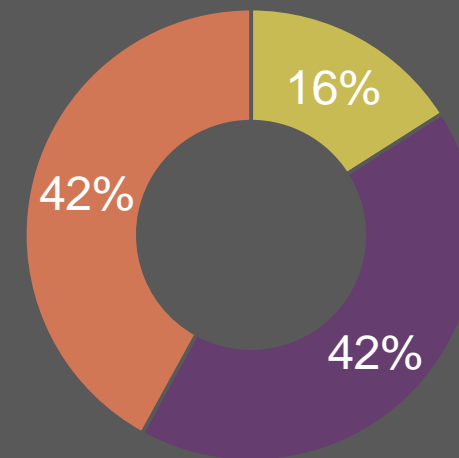
Non-Christians Describe their Relationship with the Practising Christian Who Shared with Them about their Faith in Jesus

% know a practising Christian and talked about Jesus with this person



% among English non-Christians who had a conversation with a Christian about their faith

- Felt sad that I did not share their faith
- Felt glad that I did not share their faith
- don't know



When Christians talk about their faith in Jesus 1 in 5 of English non-Christians they talk to are open to an experience or encounter with Jesus. But 59% don't want to know more.

Positive Experiences	Negative Experiences
Wanted to know more about Jesus Christ, 19%	59%, Did not want to know more about Jesus Christ
Open to an experience or encounter with Jesus, 20%	49%, Not open to an experience or encounter with Jesus
Felt sad that I did not share their faith, 16%	42%, Felt glad that I did not share their faith
Felt more positive towards Jesus Christ, 23%	30%, Felt more negative towards Jesus Christ
Felt closer to the person in question, 26%	29%, Felt less close to the person in question
Felt comfortable, 53%	32%, Felt uncomfortable

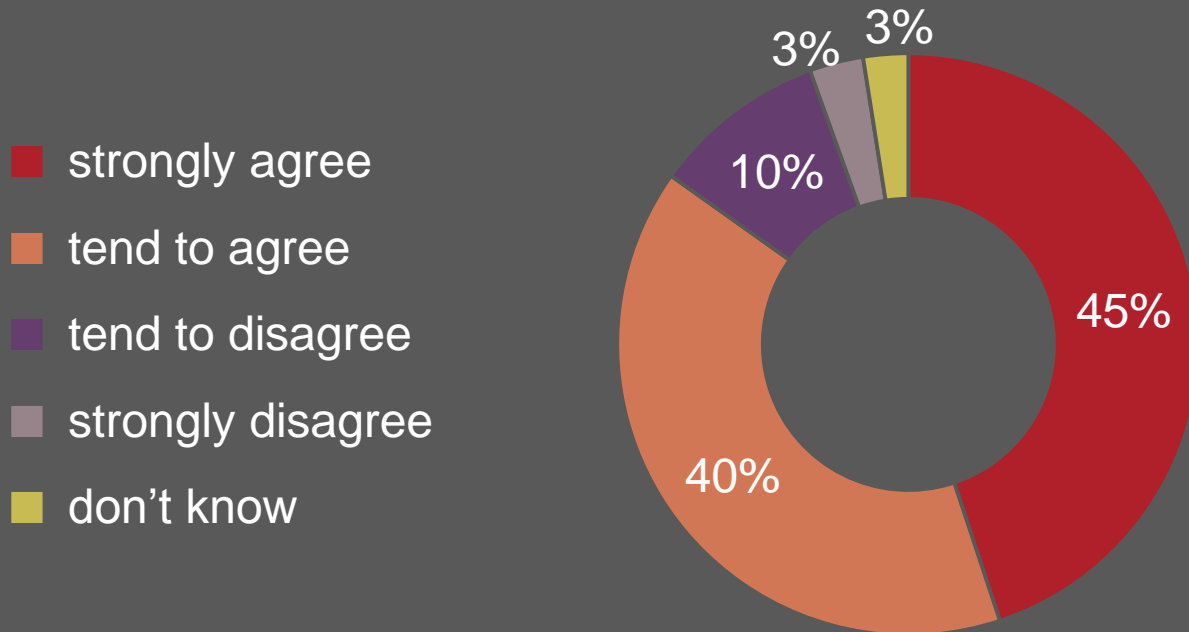
Nearly third of 18-34 year old non-Christians feel more positive about Jesus after speaking to a Christian about faith in Jesus.

Positive Experiences	Negative Experiences
Wanted to know more about Jesus Christ, 23%	52%, Did not want to know more about Jesus Christ
Open to an experience or encounter with Jesus, 22%	46%, Not open to an experience or encounter with Jesus
Felt sad that I did not share their faith, 19%	37%, Felt glad that I did not share their faith
Felt more positive towards Jesus Christ, 31%	25%, Felt more negative towards Jesus Christ
Felt closer to the person in question, 31%	28%, Felt less close to the person in question
Felt comfortable, 51%	33%, Felt uncomfortable

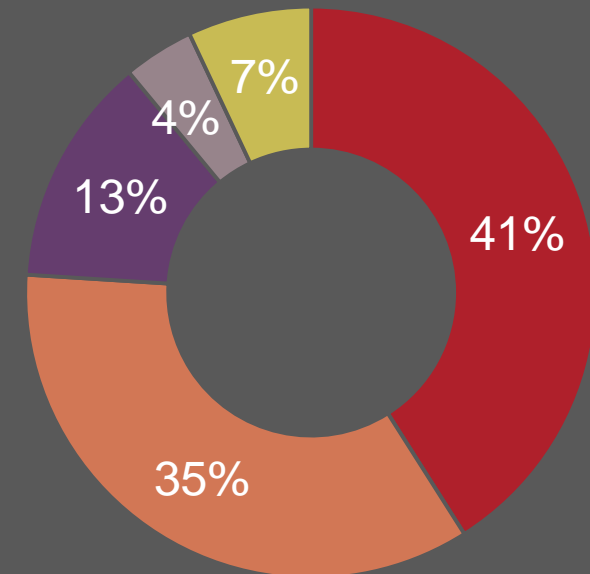
Christians' Experience of Evangelism

English Practising Christians feel a responsibility to evangelise and believe talking to non-Christians about Jesus is part of this responsibility.

Have a responsibility to evangelise.
% among English practising Christians



Talking to non-Christians about Jesus Christ is evangelism.
% among English practising Christians

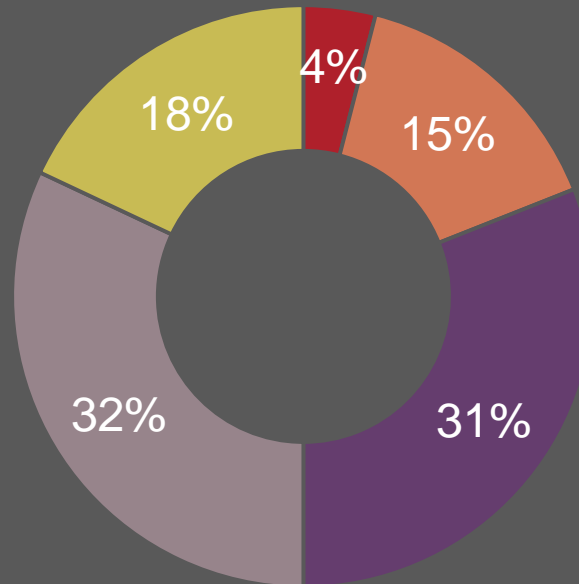


Ethnic minority English adults are more likely to believe they have a responsibility to evangelise (92%, strongly + tend to agree)

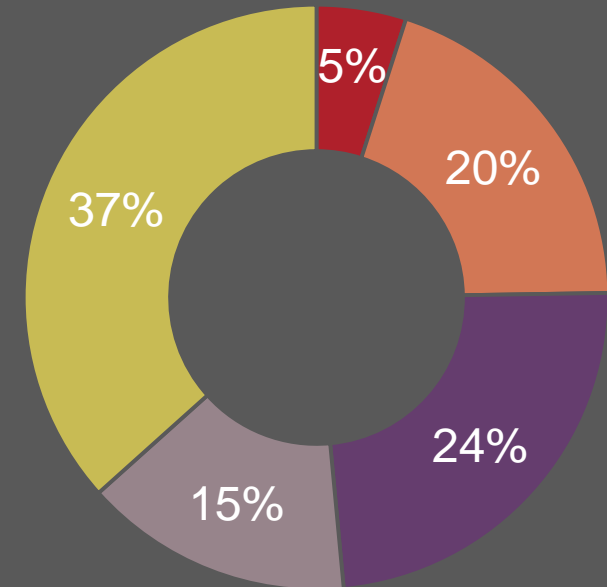
English Non-practising Christians do not think evangelism is their responsibility.

Have a responsibility to evangelise.
% among English non-practising Christians

- strongly agree
- tend to agree
- tend to disagree
- strongly disagree
- don't know



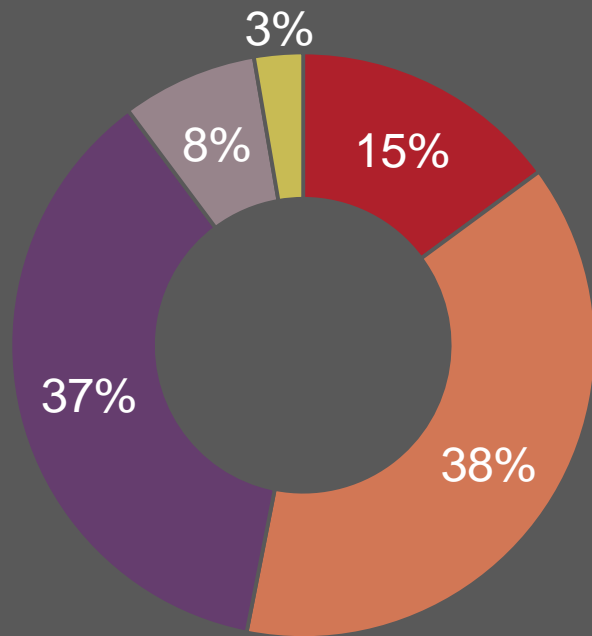
Talking to non-Christians about Jesus
Christ is evangelism.
% among English non-practising Christians



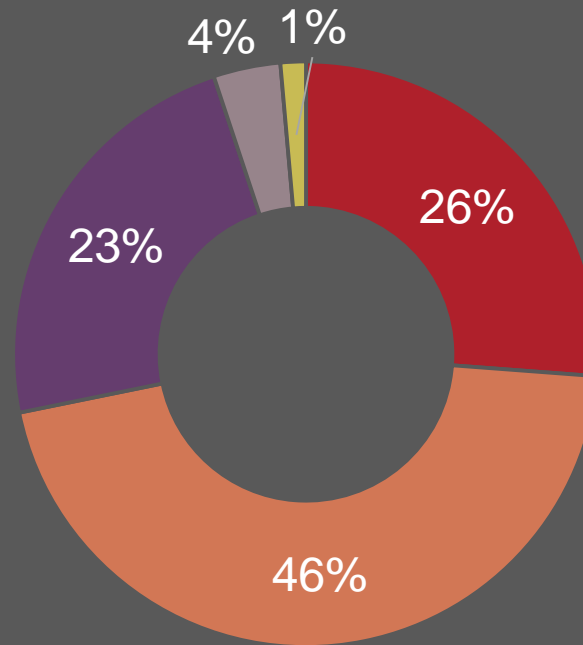
English Practising Christians look for opportunities to talk about Jesus Christ and feel comfortable doing so.

■ strongly agree
 ■ tend to agree
 ■ tend to disagree
 ■ strongly disagree
 ■ don't know

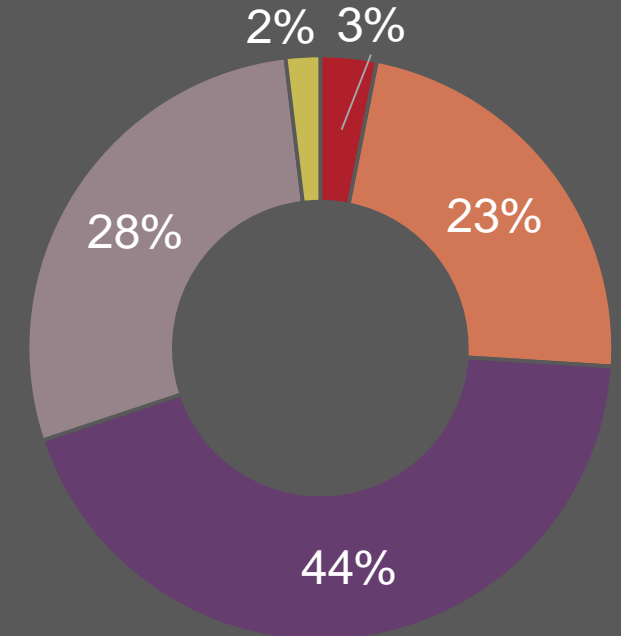
Always looking for opportunities to talk about Jesus with others.
% among English practising Christians



Comfortable talking to non-Christians about Jesus.
% among English practising Christians



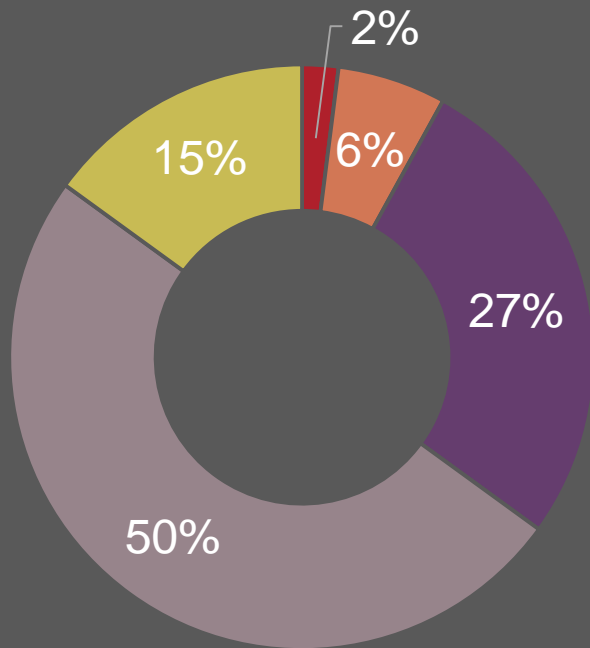
Feel unable to take up opportunities to talk about Jesus.
% among English practising Christians



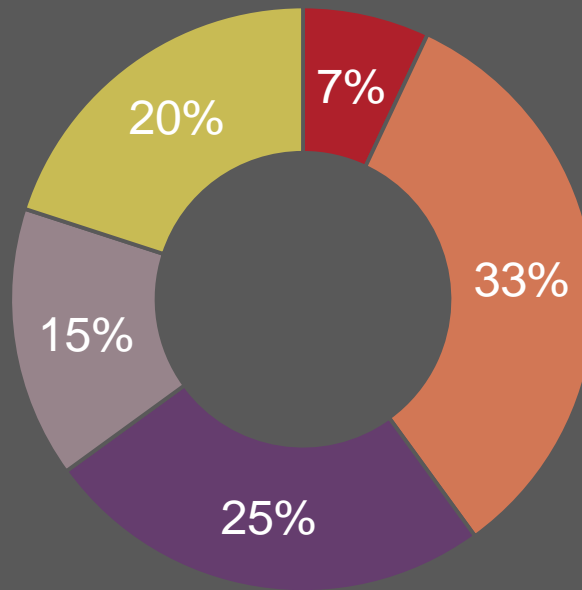
English Non-practising Christians seldom seek out opportunities and lack the confidence to talk about their faith even when the opportunity presents itself.

■ strongly agree
 ■ tend to agree
 ■ tend to disagree
 ■ strongly disagree
 ■ don't know

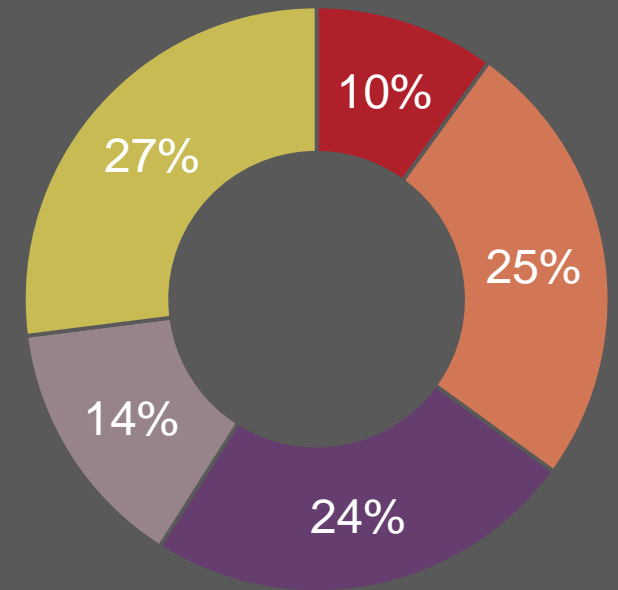
Always looking for opportunities to talk about Jesus with others.
 % among non-practising Christians



Comfortable talking to non-Christians about Jesus.
 % among non-practising Christians



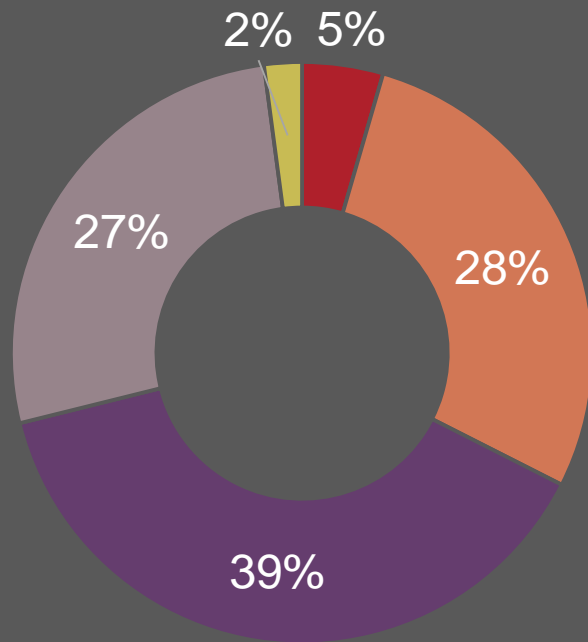
Feel unable to take up opportunities to talk about Jesus.
 % among non-practising Christians



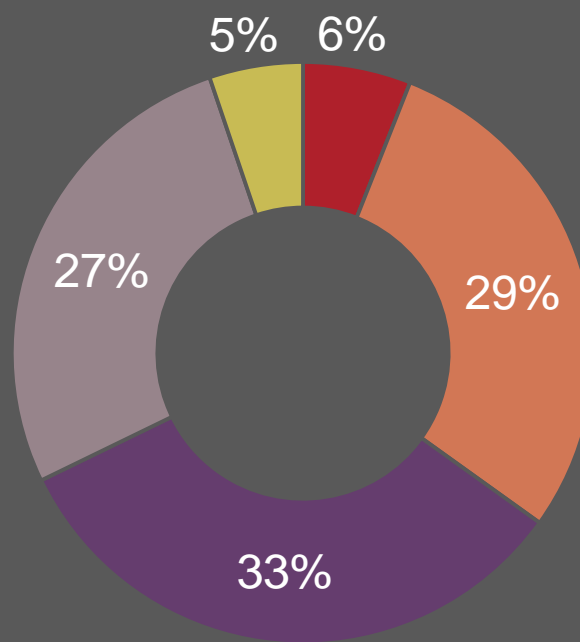
The majority of English practising Christians feel confident talking to non-Christians about Jesus.

■ strongly agree
 ■ tend to agree
 ■ tend to disagree
 ■ strongly disagree
 ■ don't know

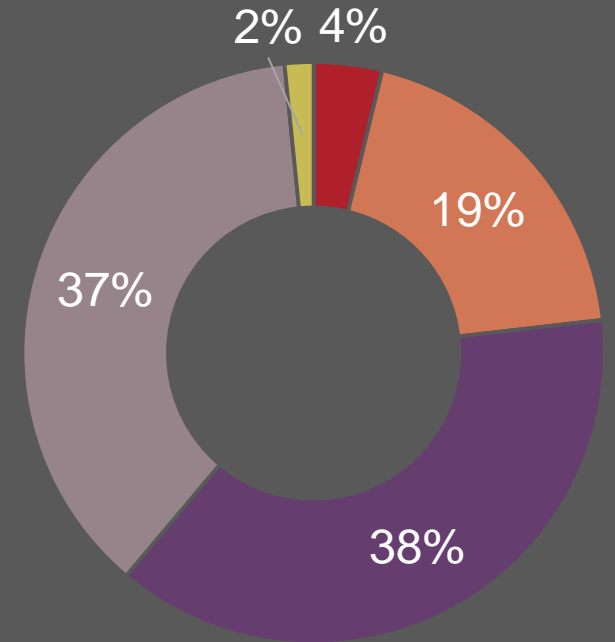
Afraid of causing offence when talking to non-Christians.
% among practising Christians



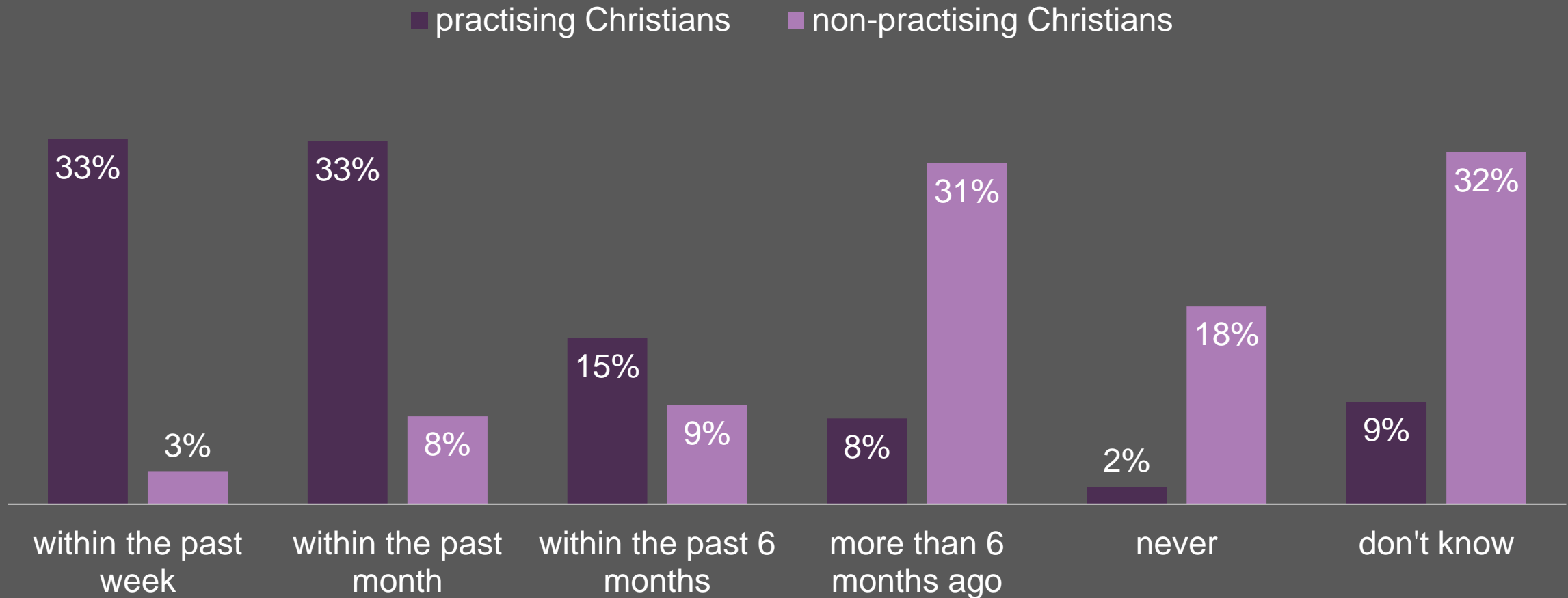
Think others are better suited to talk to non-Christians about Jesus.
% among practising Christians



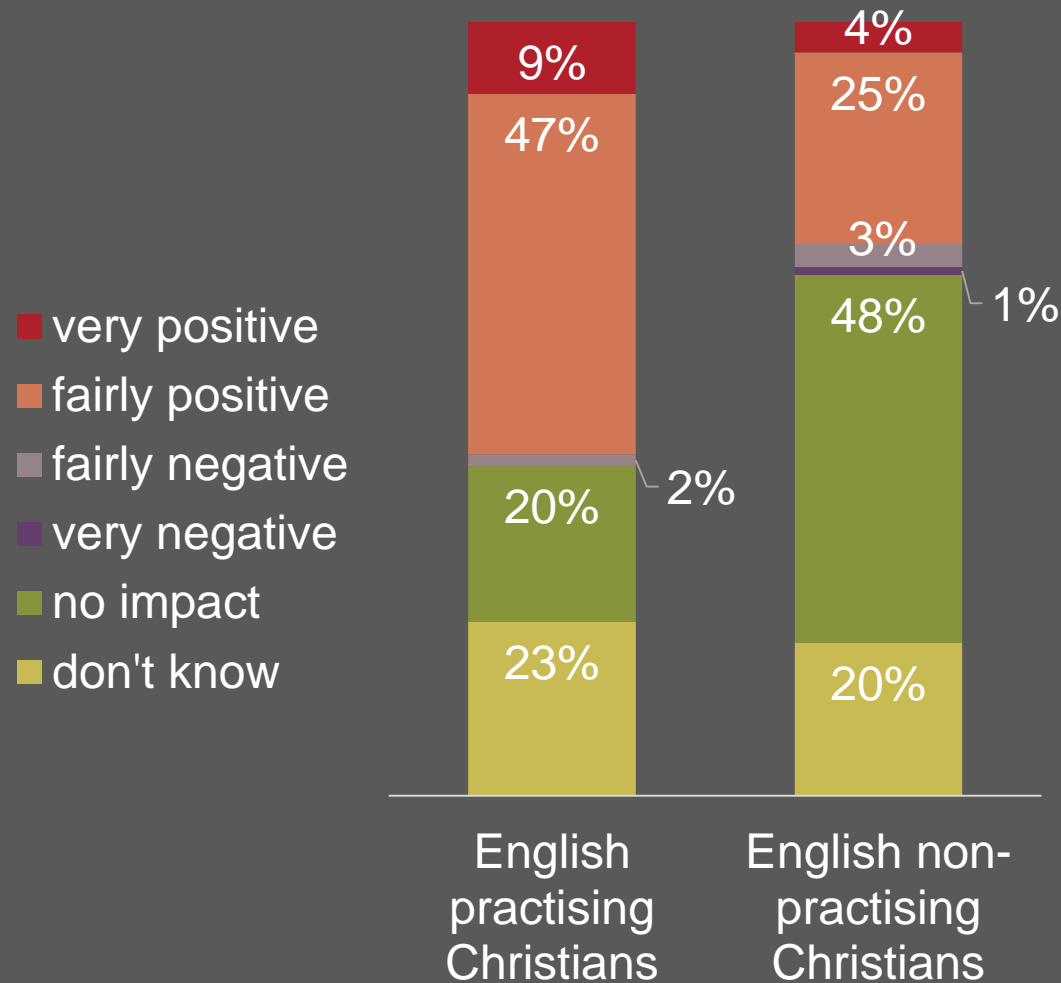
Do not know how to talk to non-Christians about Jesus.
% among practising Christians



Two-thirds of English practising Christians have talked about Jesus to a non-Christian in the past month.

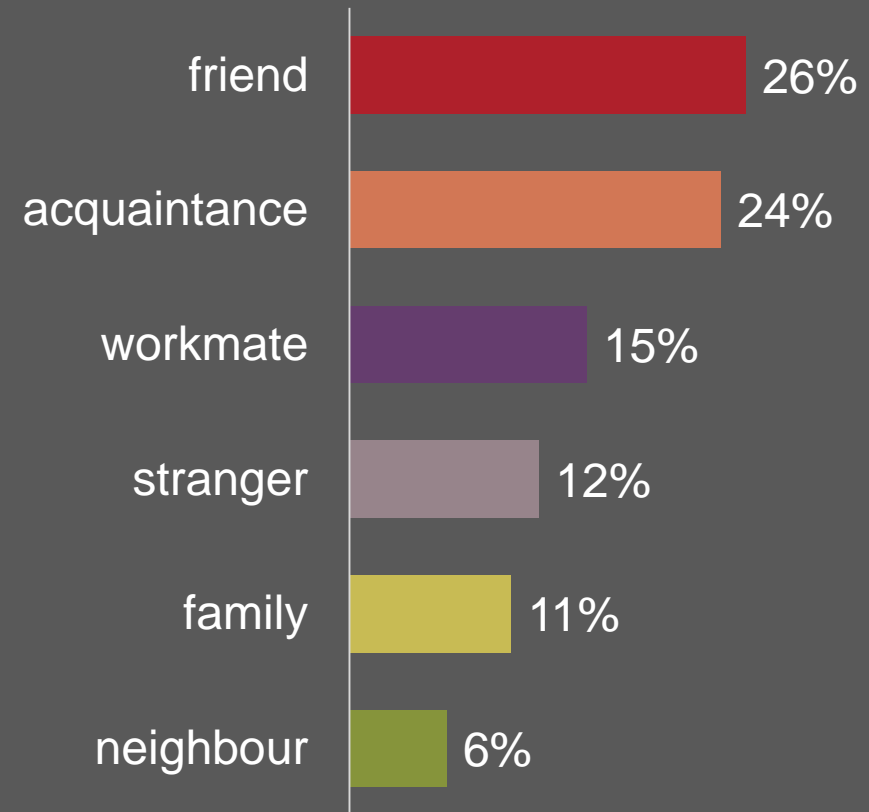


English practising Christians tend to be optimistic about the impact of their evangelism efforts.



Relationship with Non-Christian

% among English practising Christians who talked about Jesus with a non-Christian



English Christians and English non-Christians remember the conversations about Jesus similarly.

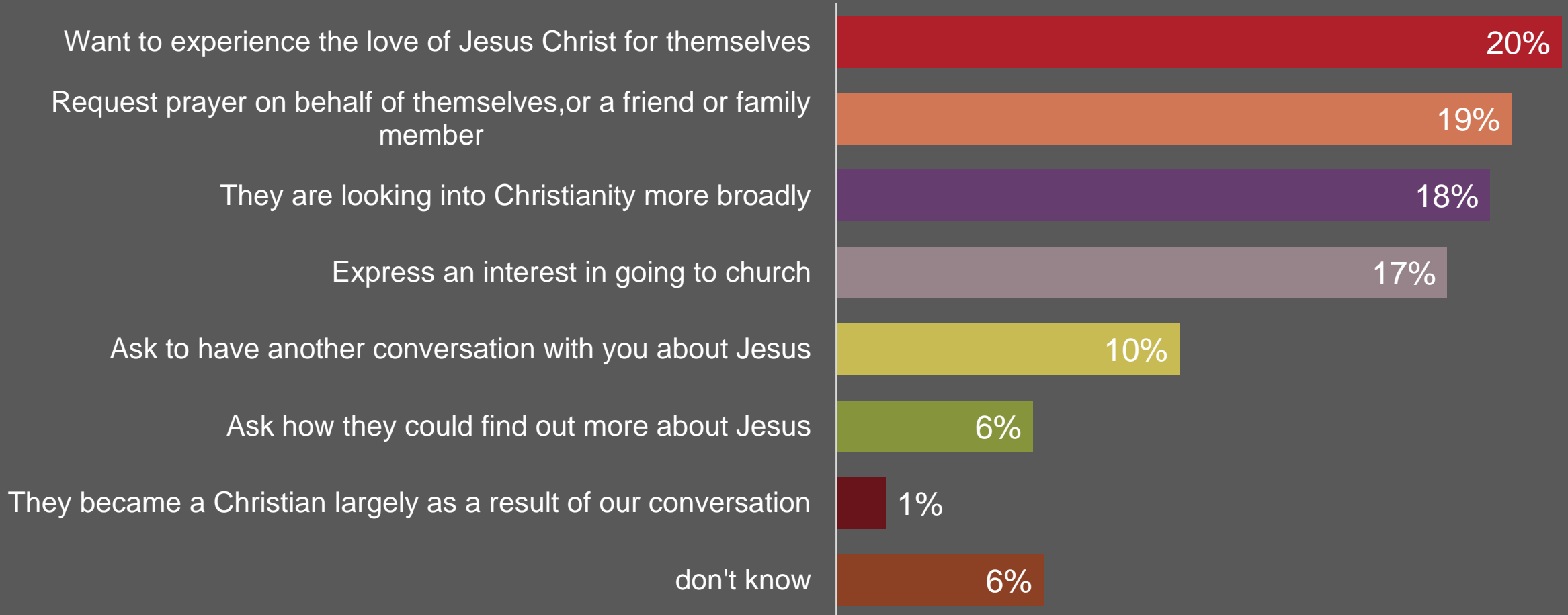
The Christian asked the non-Christian...	how English practising Christians remember it	how English non-Christians remember it
<input type="checkbox"/> If he or she wanted you to pray on behalf of themselves, or for someone else	27%	19%
<input type="checkbox"/> To come to a church event	20%	16%
<input type="checkbox"/> To come with you to a church service	15%	18%
<input type="checkbox"/> If she or he was willing to talk about Jesus Christ again sometime	14%	15%
<input type="checkbox"/> If they wanted to attend a course about Christianity / Jesus	8%	8%
<input type="checkbox"/> If they wanted to experience the love of Jesus Christ for themselves	8%	13%

** respondents could choose multiple options.*

English Non-Christians' response to the conversation about Jesus.

How Practising Christians Remember It

% among English practising Christians who have spoken with a non-Christian



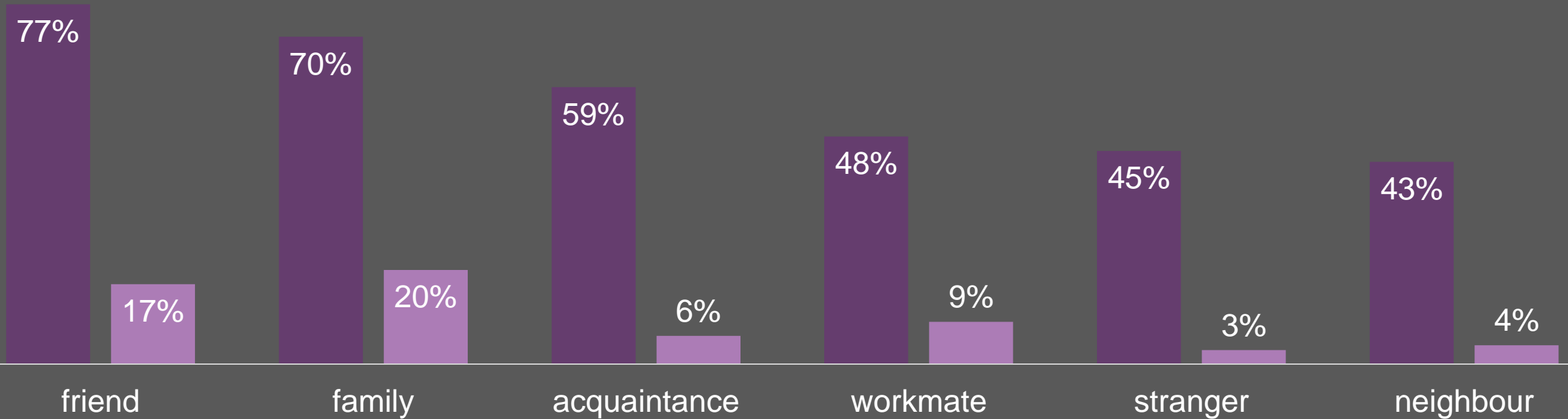
** respondents could choose multiple options.*

Over the past five years English practising Christians have been the most active in sharing their faith with friends and family.

Relationship with the non-Christian they talked to

% among Christians who shared about Jesus in the past five years

■ English practising Christians ■ English non-practising Christians

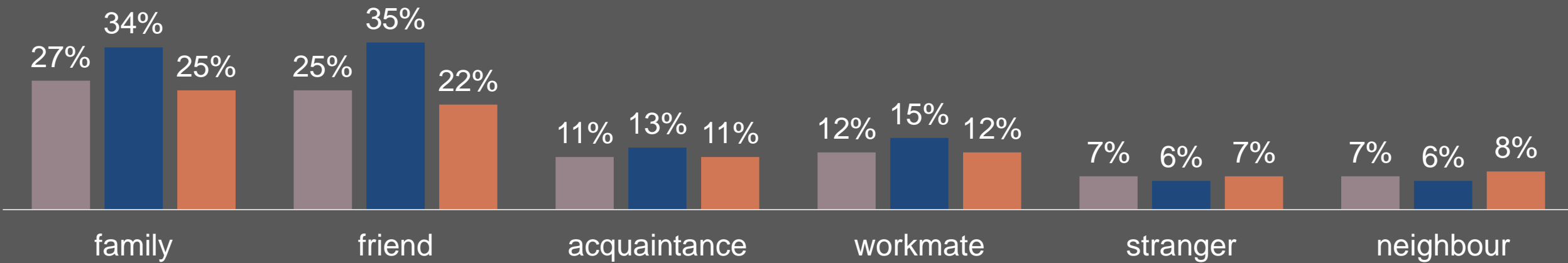


18-34 year olds are somewhat more active than older Christians in England when it comes to talking about their faith.

Relationship with the non-Christian they talked to

% among Christians who talked about Jesus with a non-Christian in the past five years

■ all English Christians ■ 18-34 year olds ■ 35+ years



A Christian's Faith Journey

All Influences that Led to Conversions among UK Practising Christians

Growing up in a Christian family	41%	Visiting/praying in open churches (i.e., not during a service)	5%
Attending a church service(s), other than a wedding or funeral	29%	Christian media (TV, radio, books, websites, etc.)	4%
Reading the Bible	28%	Going to an introduction to Christianity course like Alpha or Christianity Explored	4%
Conversation(s) with Christian(s) you knew well	27%	Dreams or visions	3%
An experience of the love of Jesus Christ	23%	Newer forms of church such as messy church or café church	1%
A spiritual experience you could not explain	17%	A church wedding or funeral	1%
A particular life event, whether positive or negative	16%	Specific Christians on social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, etc.)	*%
Conversation(s) with Christian(s) you did not know well	9%	Other	8%
Christian Union or other university program	6%	none of the above	*%
An individual church's outreach program (e.g., parent and toddler group, food bank)	5%	don't know	*%

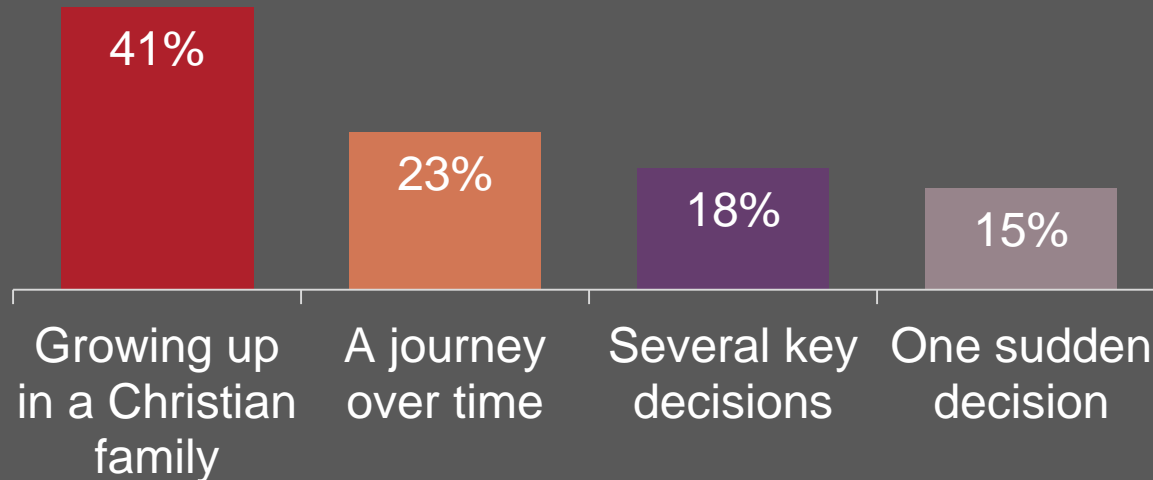
* Represents less than one-half of one percent

Many English practising Christians attribute their faith to growing up in a Christian home.

93% of English practising Christians have been a Christian for 11 years or more.

Personal Faith Journey Descriptions

% among practising Christians



Top Positive Influences

- ❑ Growing up in a Christian family, 41%
- ❑ Attending church services, 28%
- ❑ Reading the Bible, 27%
- ❑ Conversations with a Christian they knew well, 27%
- ❑ An experience of the love of Jesus, 24%
- ❑ A spiritual experience you could not explain, 17%

All Influences that Led to Conversions among English Practising Christians

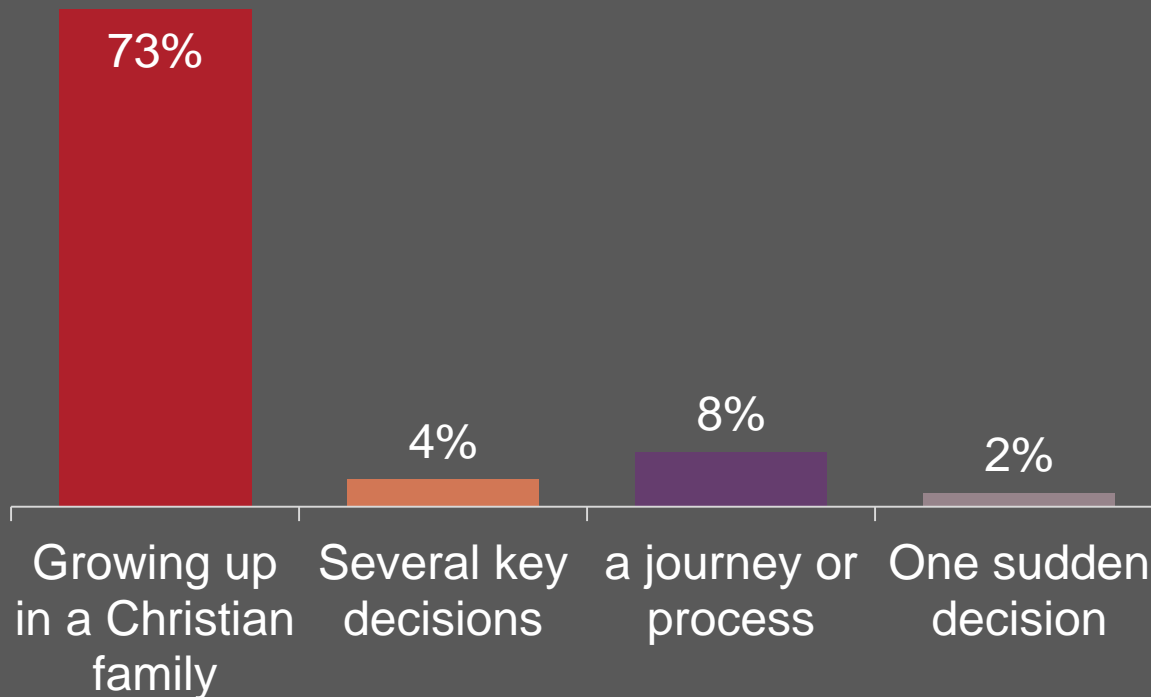
Growing up in a Christian family	41%	Going to an introduction to Christianity course like Alpha or Christianity Explored	5%
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Reading the Bible	27%	Visiting/praying in open churches (i.e., not during a service)	4%
Conversation(s) with Christian(s) you knew well	27%	Dreams or visions	3%
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A spiritual experience you could not explain	17%	A church wedding or funeral	1%
A particular life event, whether positive or negative	16%	Specific Christians on social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, etc.)	*%
Conversation(s) with Christian(s) you did not know well	9%	Other, please specify	9%
Christian Union or other university program	6%	none of the above	*%
An individual church's outreach program (e.g., parent and toddler group, food bank)	5%	don't know	*%

* Represents less than one-half of one percent

Growing up in a Christian home becomes even more important for English non-practising Christian's faith journey.

Personal Faith Journey Descriptions

% among English non-practising Christians



Top Positive Influences

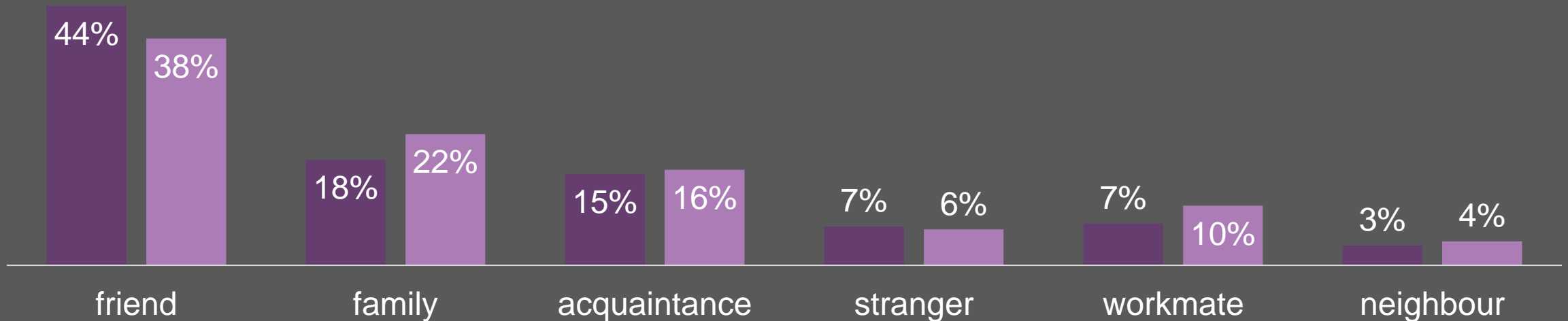
- Growing up in a Christian family, 56% ▲
- Attending church services, 21% ▼
- Conversations with a Christian they knew well, 8% ▼
- An experience of the love of Jesus, 3% ▼
- Reading the Bible, 9% ▼
- A church wedding or funeral, 14%

Arrows (▲ ▼) represent changes compared to practising Christians.

Most English practising Christians credit their friends for introducing them to Jesus.

Relationship with the Person who Introduced them to Jesus

■ English practising Christians ■ English non-practising Christians

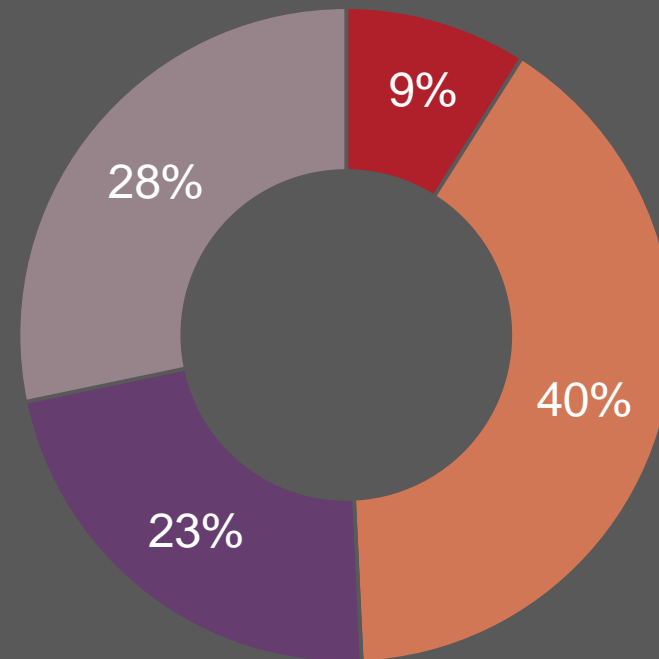


English practising Christians are more likely to have been brought to faith by someone younger than themselves.

% among Christians who came to faith because a conversation with another Christian.

% among English practising Christians

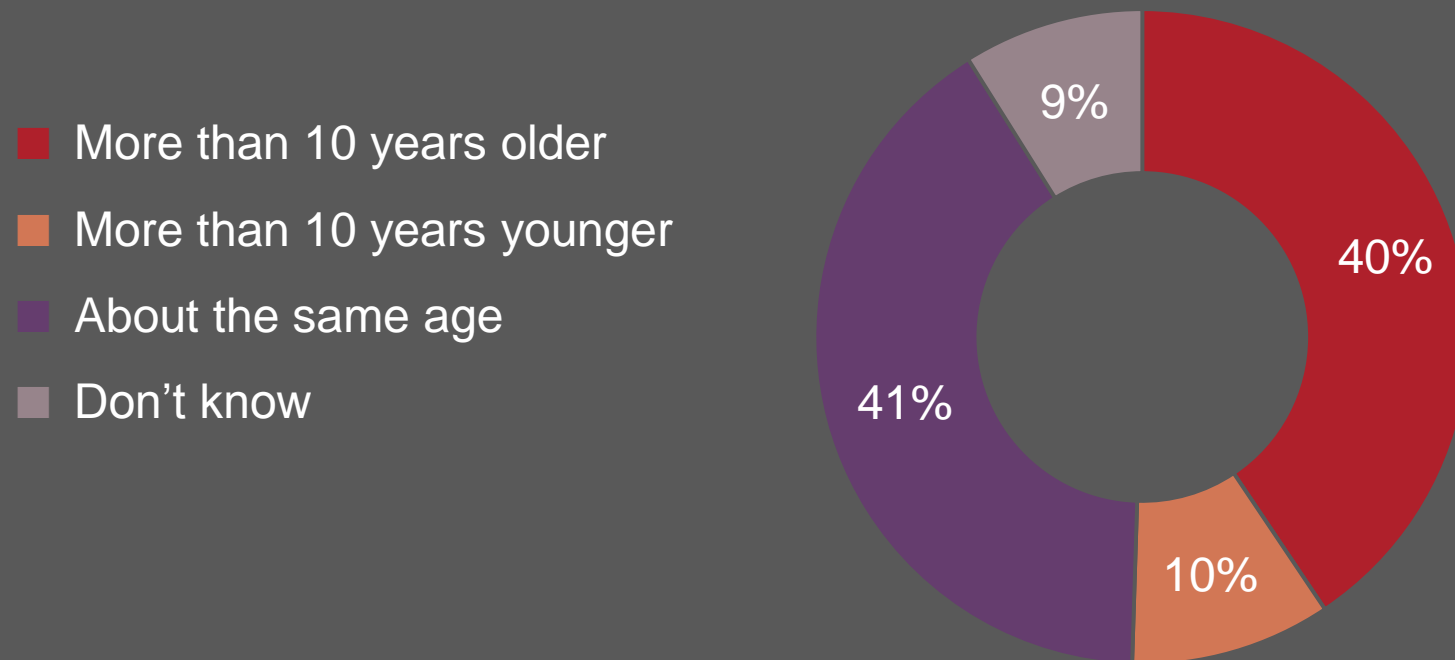
- More than 10 years older
- More than 10 years younger
- About the same age
- Don't know



English non-practising Christians are more likely to have been brought to faith by someone older than themselves or someone about the same age.

% among Christians who came to faith because a conversation with another Christian.

% among English non-practising Christians



English Practising Christians recall the conversation that brought them to faith in a very positive light.

Positive Experiences	Negative Experiences
Felt more positive towards Jesus Christ, 90%	2%, Felt more negative towards Jesus Christ
Wanted to know more about Jesus Christ, 85%	2%, Did not want to know more about Jesus Christ
Open to an experience or encounter with Jesus, 82%	3%, Not open to an experience or encounter with Jesus
Felt comfortable, 80%	11%, Felt uncomfortable
Felt closer to the person in question, 80%	2%, Felt less close to the person in question
Felt sad that I did not share their faith, 46%	2%, Felt glad that I did not share their faith