



Survey Results for Spiritual Exercises Faith Sharing Retreat Group

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Introduction: “Evangelizing Catholic Media Consumers in an Online Faith-Sharing Group”

General Goal: This Project explored one effort to evangelize Catholic media consumers through social media, namely a 30-day Ignatian online faith-sharing retreat group based on the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* and advertised through *America Media*’s Facebook page.

General Objective: The Project aimed to give *America* consumers the experience of an online faith-sharing group, using social media to form a community from different generations which do not normally interact.

General Expected Outcome: The Project expected to create a hidden multi-generational faith-sharing community on Facebook for Catholic media consumers, allowing them to self-report how their digital engagement with the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* retreat led them to spiritual growth, increased comfort with online faith-sharing, and new resolutions regarding participation at religiously sponsored events.

Specific Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes: Four weeklong sessions followed the four graces that the *Exercises* proposed to retreatants for spiritual growth: To accept oneself as a sinner loved by God; to follow Jesus more intently; to desire to suffer with Jesus in his passion; and to desire to rejoice with the risen Jesus. Pre-retreat and post-retreat survey questions sought to indicate retreatants’ self-reported progress in receiving these graces.

Pastoral Issue

- As the philosopher and Catholic layman Marshall McLuhan theorized in the 1960s, electric media has shifted social communications from a packaged to a participatory media culture, reshaping human interaction from sender-receiver messaging to conversational interaction.
- The digital revolution of smart device technology has accelerated this shift in recent years.
- Although the Catholic Church since Vatican II has embraced mass media as indispensable means to evangelization, and called for evangelization of the digital space, recent Pew surveys show Catholics trailing other Christians in sharing their faith online, where social networks strongly influence the habits of Millennials and Post-millennials.
- This slowness of Catholic media in adapting to the digital revolution has fueled a growing pastoral disconnect with emerging generations of “digital natives” who now encounter religion online before they participate in a faith community offline.
- Catholic social media outreach must shift from an understanding of evangelization as catechesis to evangelization as “the sharing of faith in Christ” (Cardinal Arinze) to better accompany younger generations that continue falling away from organized religion.

Theological Foundations

Since the Second Vatican Council, successive popes in their annual World Communications Day addresses and various other documents have developed a body of magisterial teaching on social communications, suggesting the following theological foundations for this project—

1. The unity-in-diversity of *communio* that the Trinity symbolizes and Biblical images like St. Paul's "one body, many parts" (1 Cor. 12) propose as models for communal interaction
2. The papacy's post-conciliar retrieval of synodality as an ecclesial expression of *communio* and a dialogical space to foster the shift from a packaged to participatory Church
3. The New Evangelization as an inspiration to find ever-new ways of reaching people on the existential peripheries of faith, and the *Spiritual Exercises* as a tested framework for it to unfold in a social media context

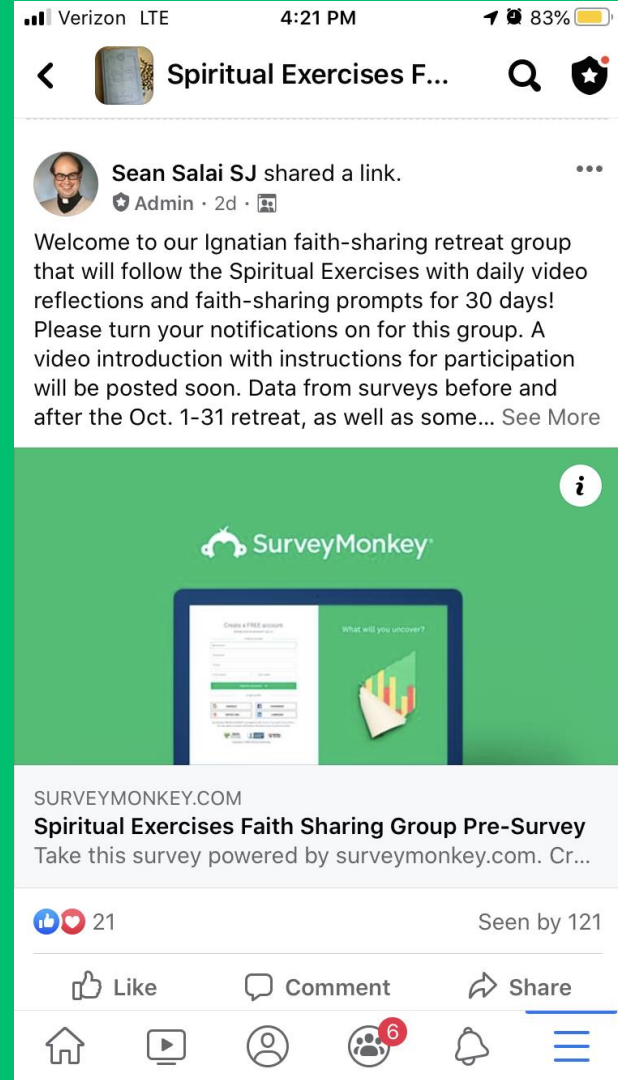
With his distinctive style, Pope Francis models Ignatian leadership principles that can help an online faith-sharing group moderator adapt these foundations successfully to digital outreach.

Methodology, Design, Implementation

- **Pastoral Methodology:** The Canadian Jesuit philosophical theologian Bernard J.F. Lonergan sees the shift to authentic consciousness as a prerequisite for religious conversion that unfolds conversationally.
- In this Lonerganian context, the digitally accelerated shifts toward participatory media and a participatory Church require a deeper shift of consciousness among conversation partners, and the Project's survey instrumentation thus sought to discern signs of such movement in participants' self-reported interchanges with God, others, and themselves during the 30-day faith-sharing retreat.
- **Project Design:** To foster an intergenerational experience, the Project mediated between generational values by adapting the proven spiritual tradition of the *Exercises* to youth-oriented new media culture, choosing Facebook for asynchronous interaction (daily video reflections with faith-sharing prompts) since it remains the largest social network for all ages and thus where they most often intersect online.
- Mindful of research into online group formation that shows interpersonal unity-in-diversity rising as groups shrink to committed cores that grow in common knowledge/repertoires, and of Christian principles for digital discipleship, the Project aimed to cast a broad recruiting net through *America's* existing Facebook groups and whittle the group down to a smaller number (still above 25) participating as often as desired.
- **Project Implementation:** The "Spiritual Exercises Faith-Sharing Retreat" private group launched 8/30/20; introductory month of 9/1-9/30 daily videos gathered 395 members; 212 members finished pre-survey indicating an interest in continuing; 74 members finished the 10/1-10/30 retreat and 10/31-11/7 post-survey; final results were redacted to these 74 anonymous respondents for before-and-after comparison.
- Facebook analytics and anonymous quotes show positive frequent interactions over the four sessions.

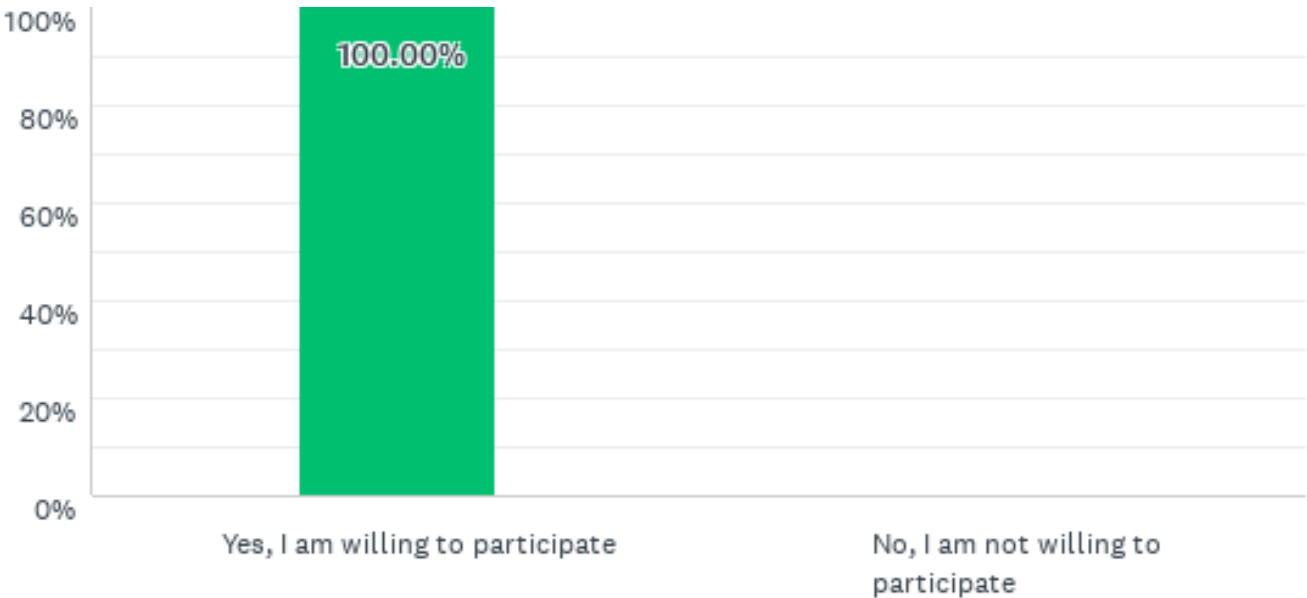
Spiritual Exercises Faith Sharing Retreat Group Pre-Survey Results and Analysis

74 total completed responses



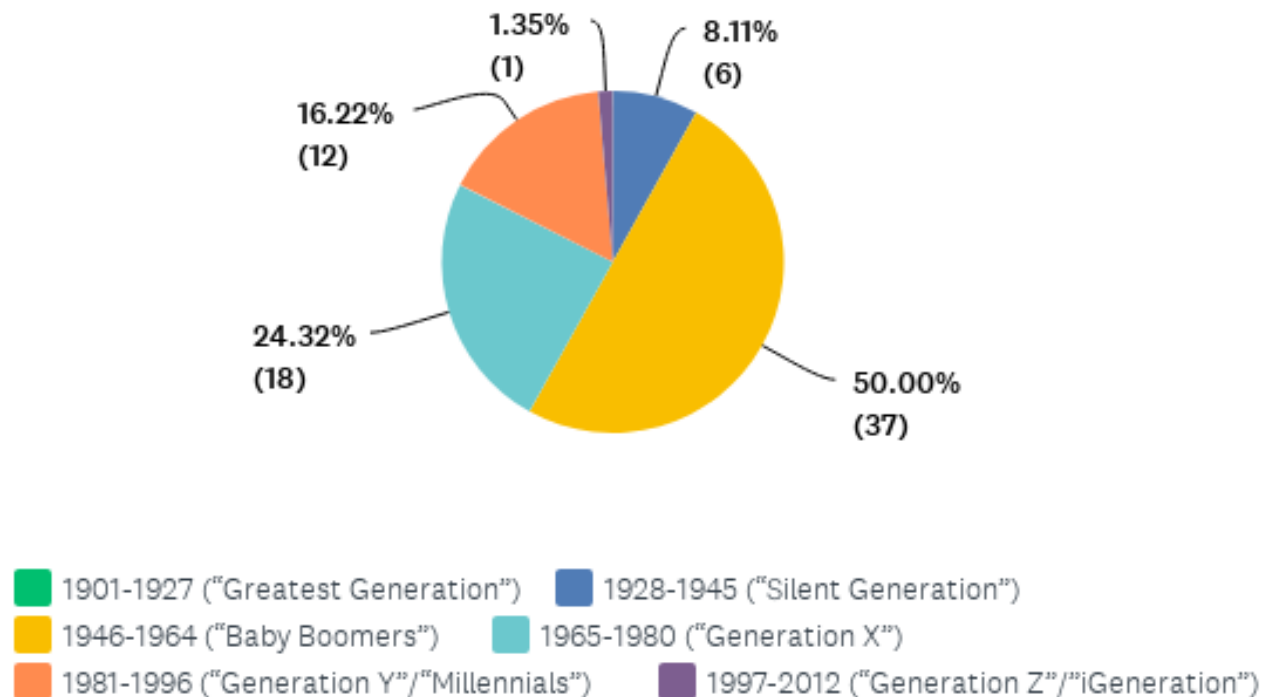
Q1: This anonymous survey asks questions about your background, online experiences, and religious habits. By continuing with this survey, you agree to participate in a 30-day online retreat faith-sharing group based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and hosted on Facebook in connection with America Media, as well as to complete a survey about your experiences after it concludes. If you select “no” in response to this first question, please do not complete the rest of the survey that follows, but submit it with only the first question completed.

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



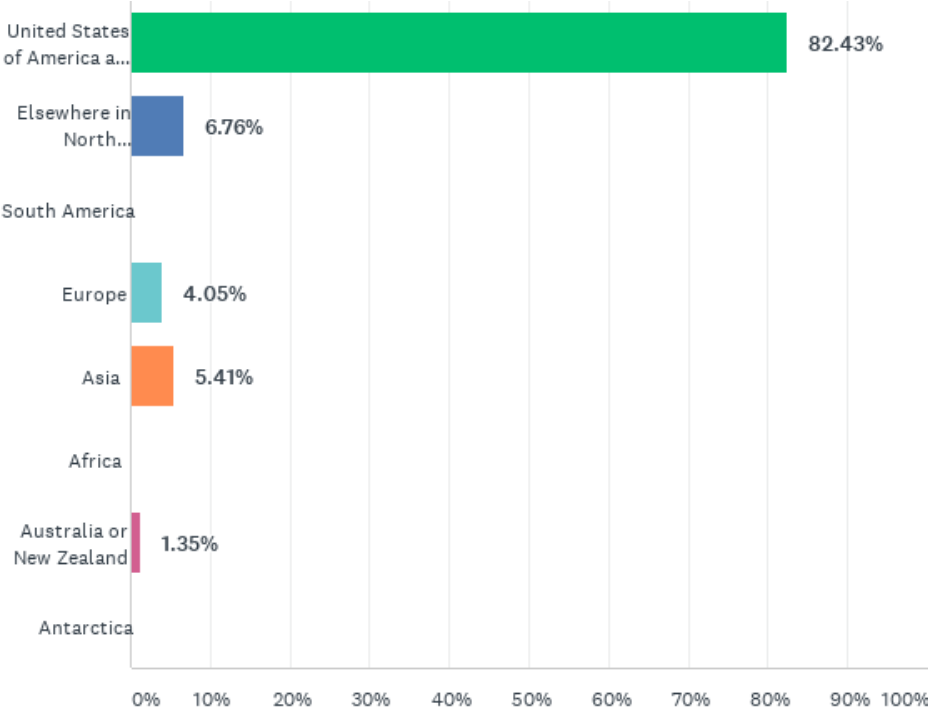
Q2: In which generation were you born?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



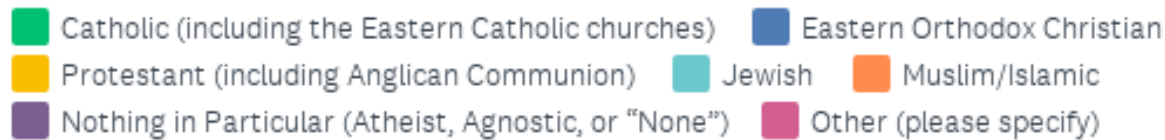
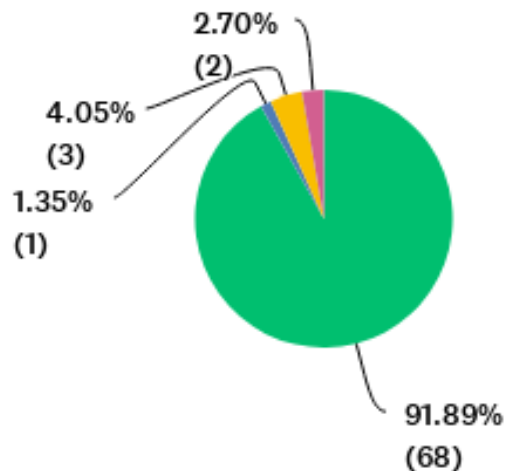
Q3: Where do you live?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



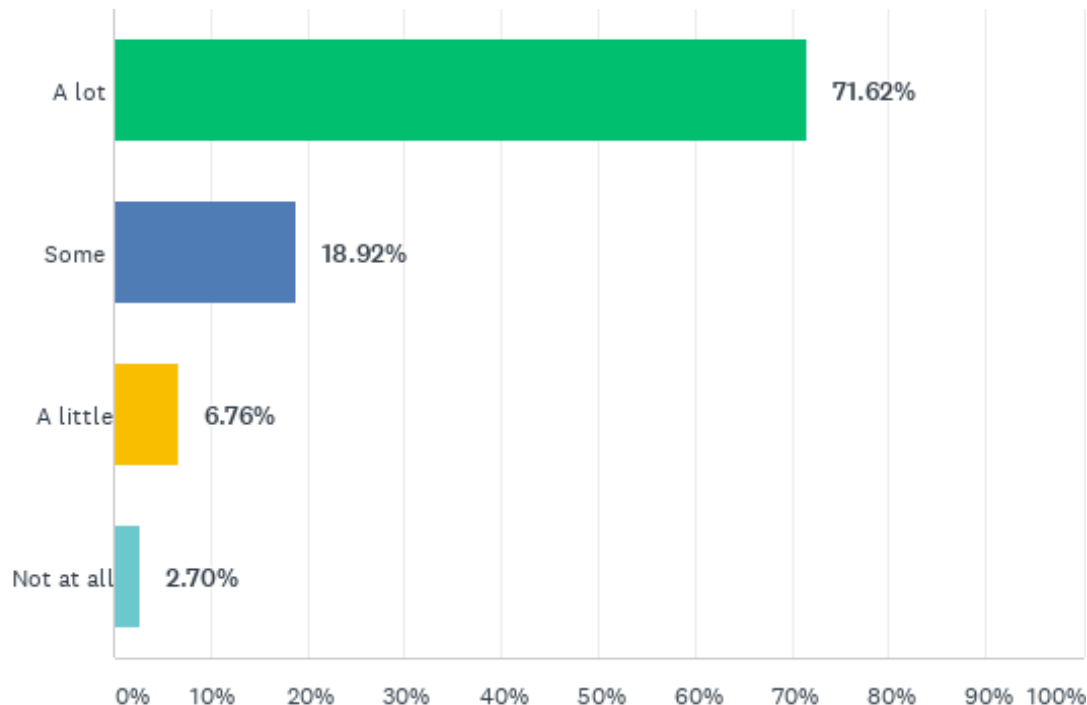
Q4: How would you describe your current religious affiliation?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



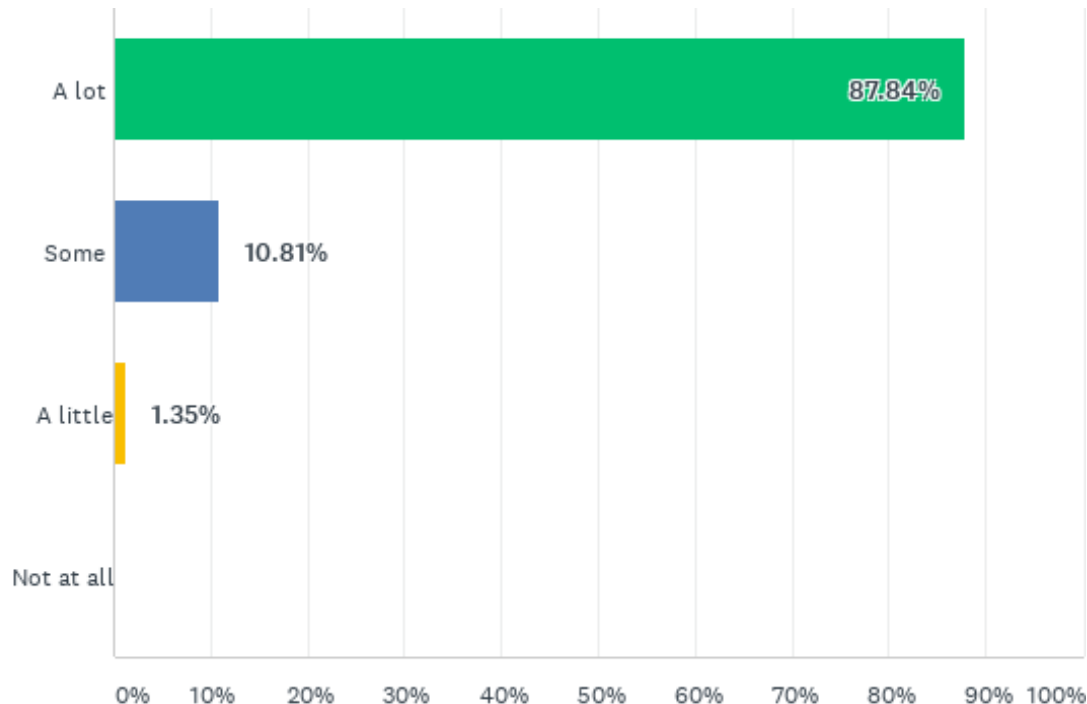
Q5: How strongly do you feel personally connected to a particular faith-based community?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



Q6: How strongly do you feel personally connected to a Higher Power as you understand it?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



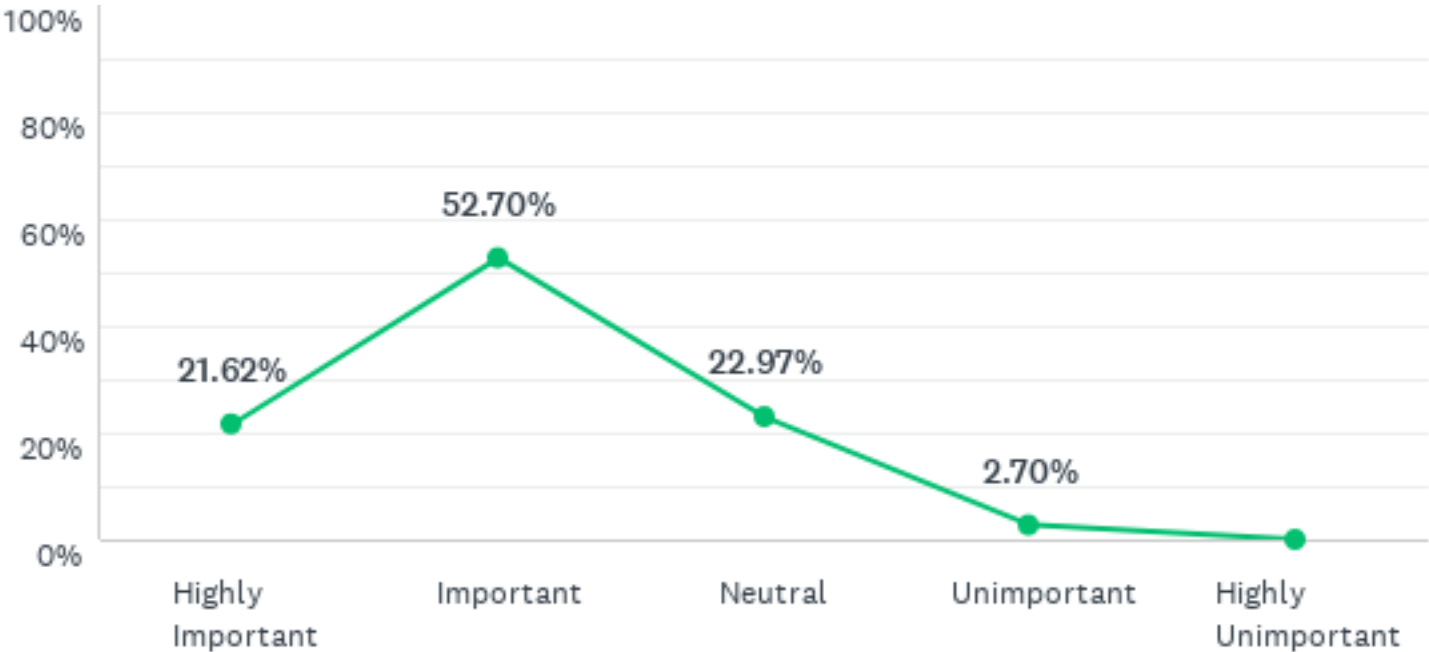
Q7: How often have you been involved in a religiously sponsored event (funeral, wedding, church service, online discussion, spiritual reading, prayer or meditation group, etc.) in the past 12 months? Select the response that most closely approximates your attendance.

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



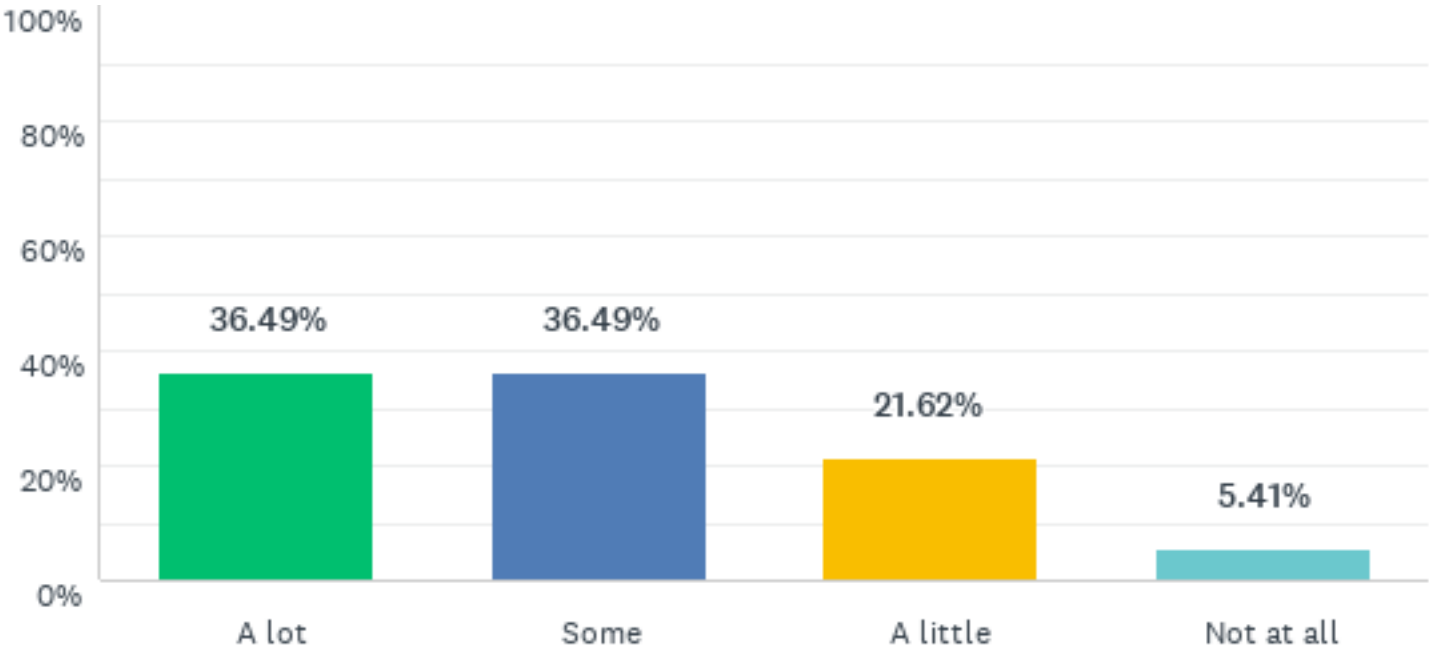
Q8: How important is online interaction (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, comment boxes, other social media platforms) in your life?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



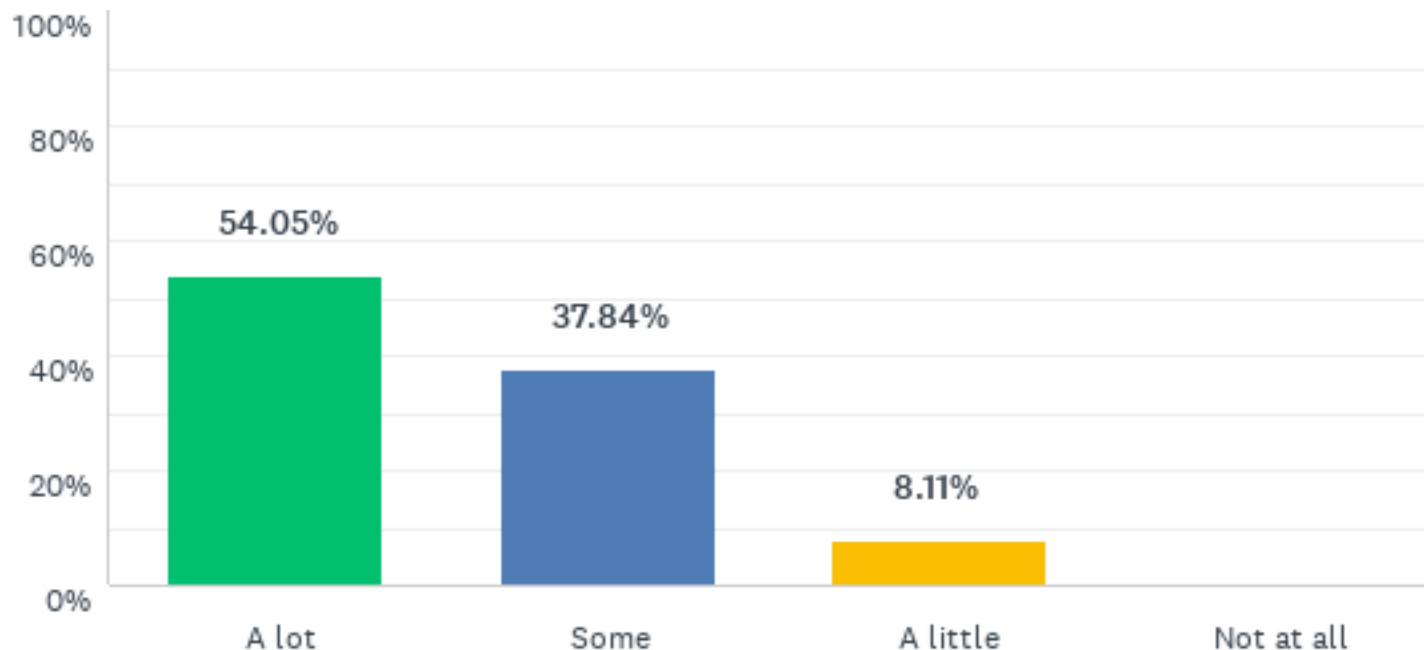
Q9: How much, if at all, have you shared your faith with others online during your life?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



Q10: How much, if at all, have you shared your faith with others offline (face-to-face) during your life?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0

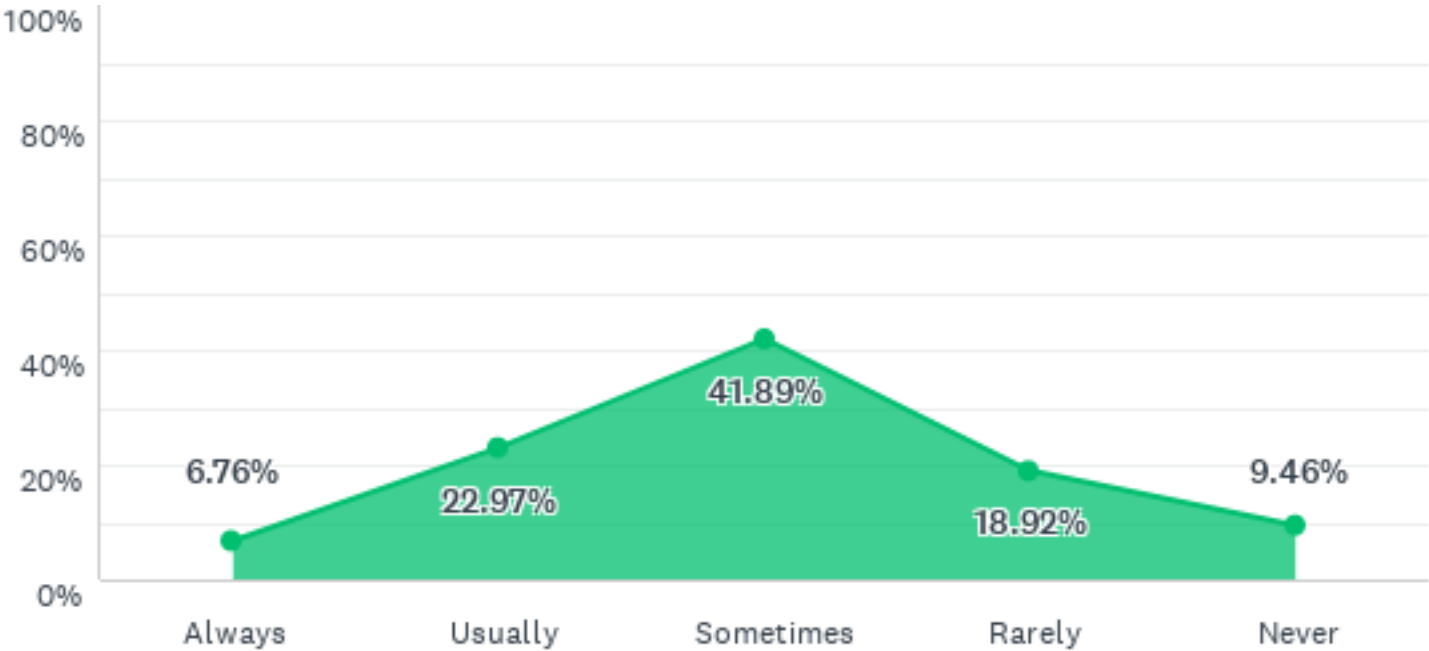


Q11 What particular hopes or desires do you bring to this online faith-sharing experience?
Please write them in the space below.

will deepen relationship God spiritual continue growing closer God hope grow learn
structure love become community develop understand online share
relationship God God welcome others spirituality faith deepen faith
life grow hope journey experience interesting better idea time new
feel prayer life group grow closer God help pray

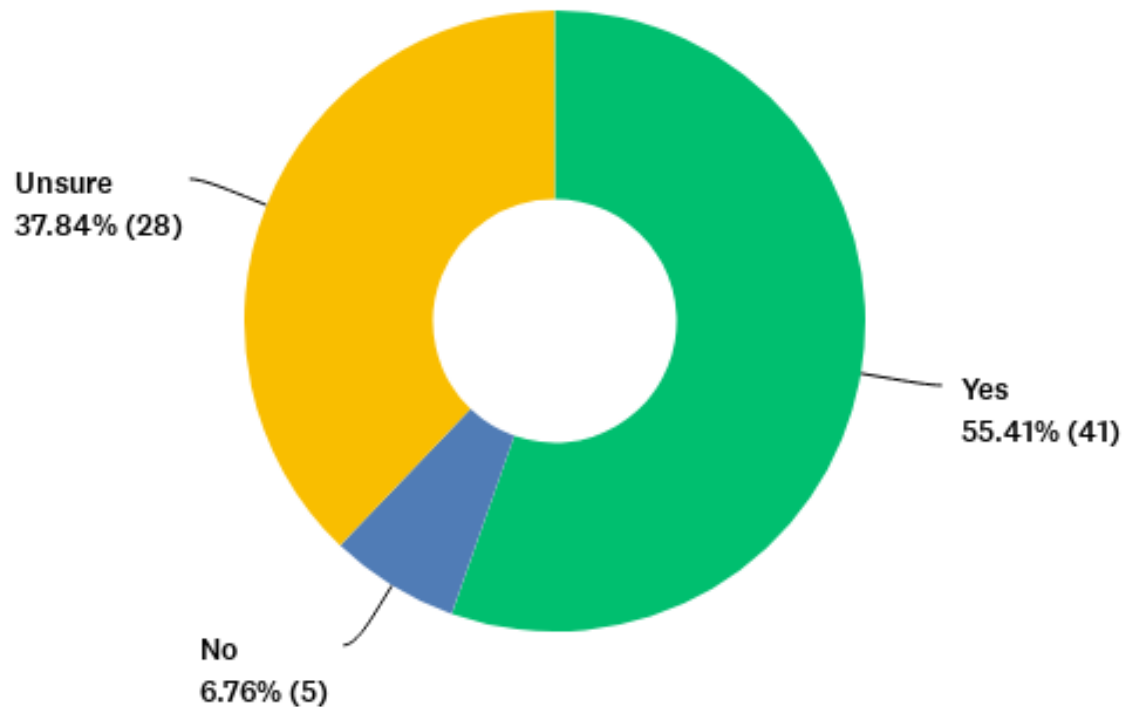
Q12: How often, if ever, does it occur to you to discuss faith-based content on Facebook?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



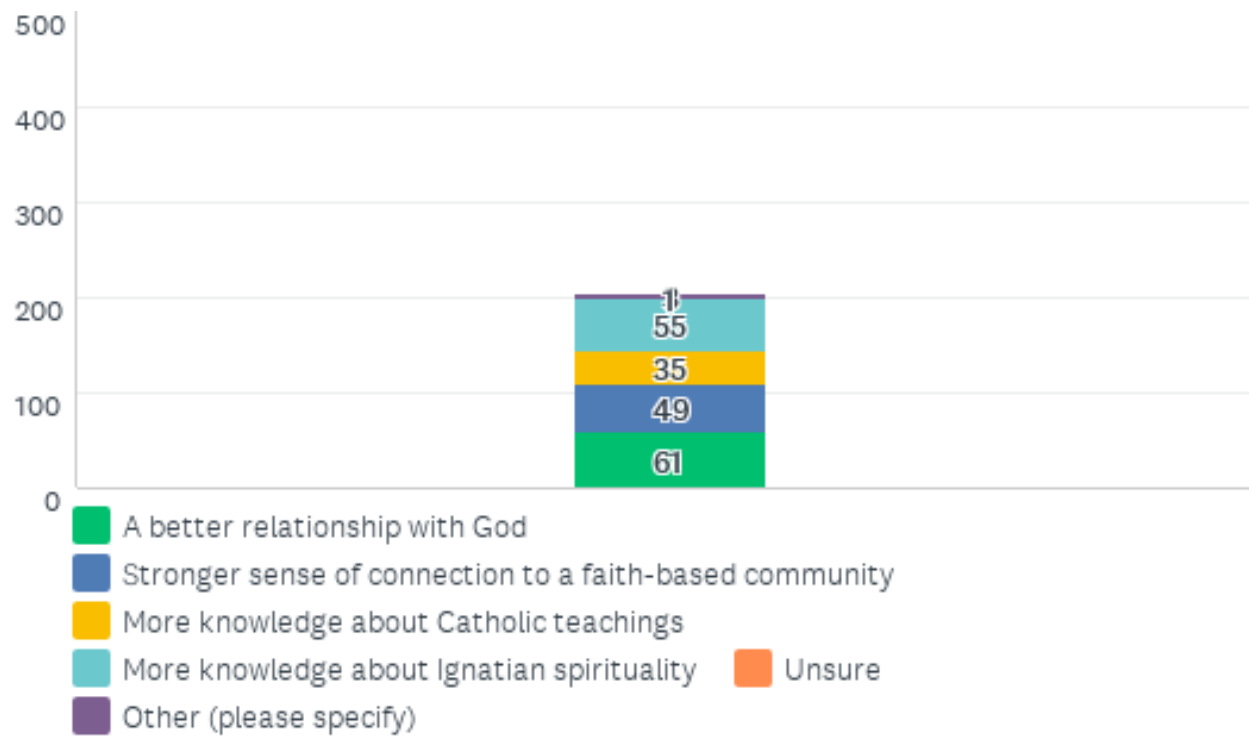
Q13: Do you consider online community to be a type of “real” community?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



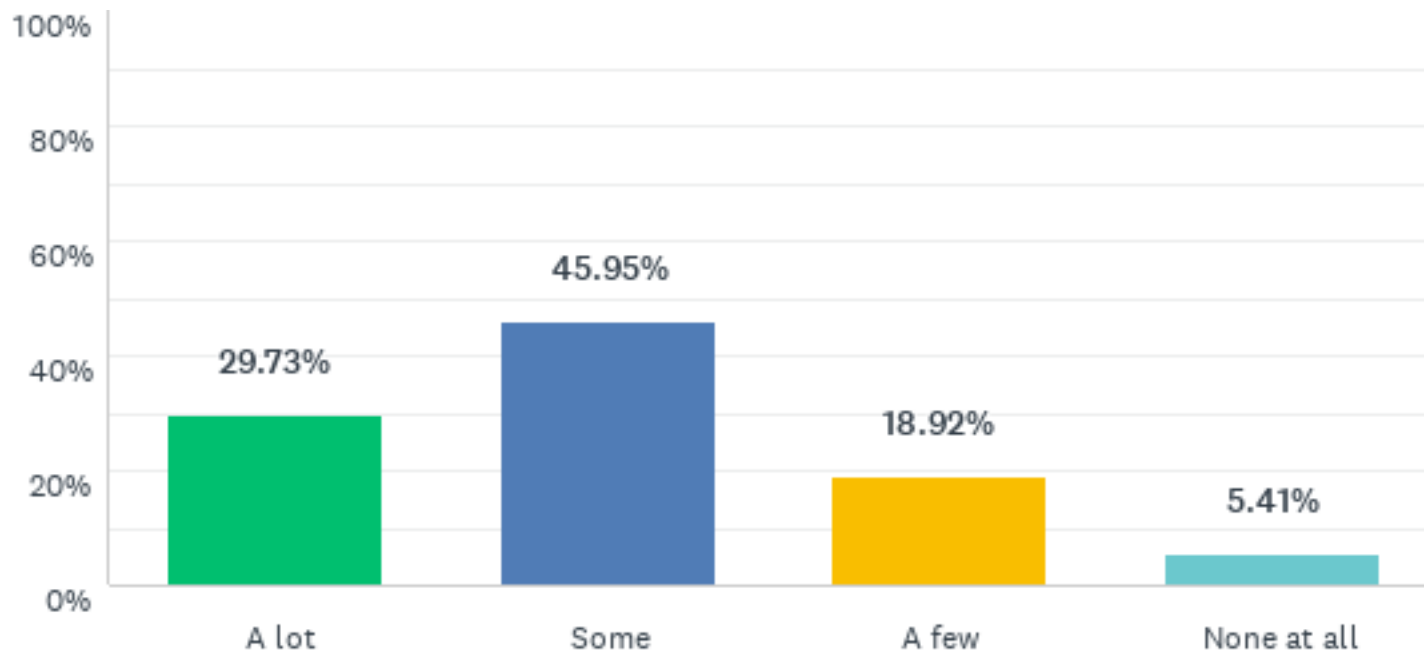
Q14: What outcome would you like to see from this online faith-sharing group? Please choose all that apply

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



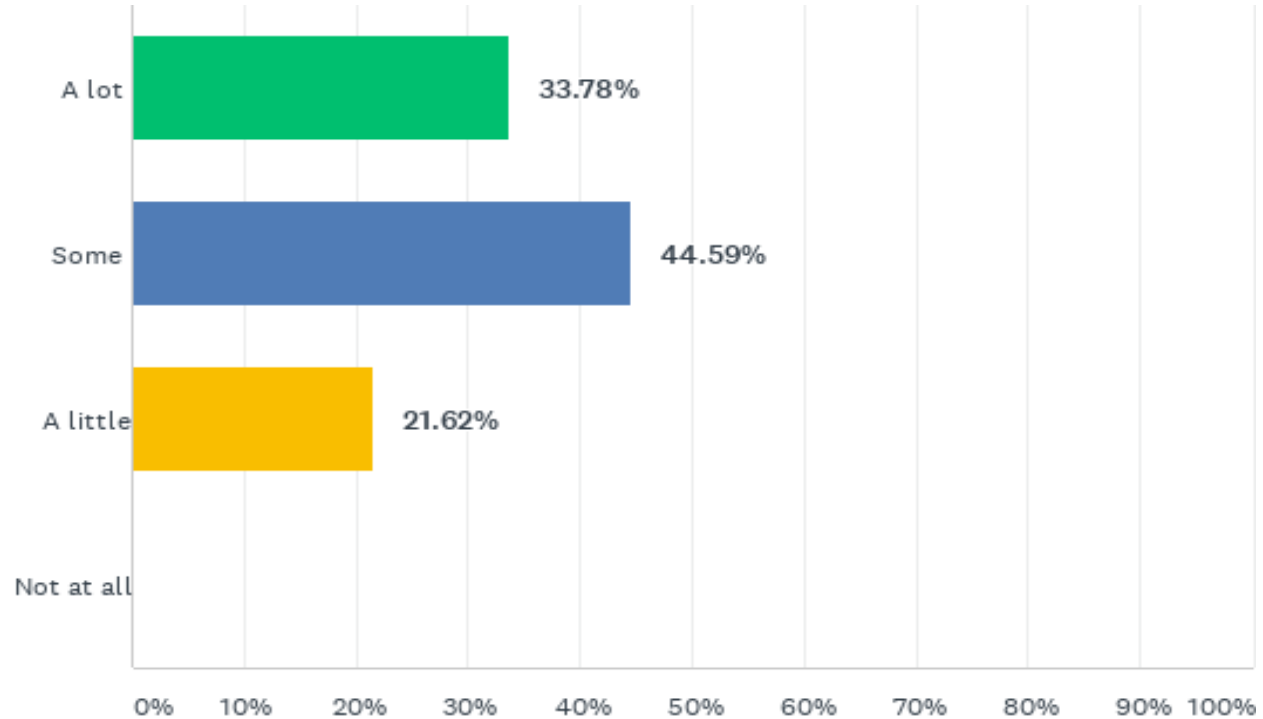
Q15: How many of the people you know online also play a role in your offline life outside of the internet?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



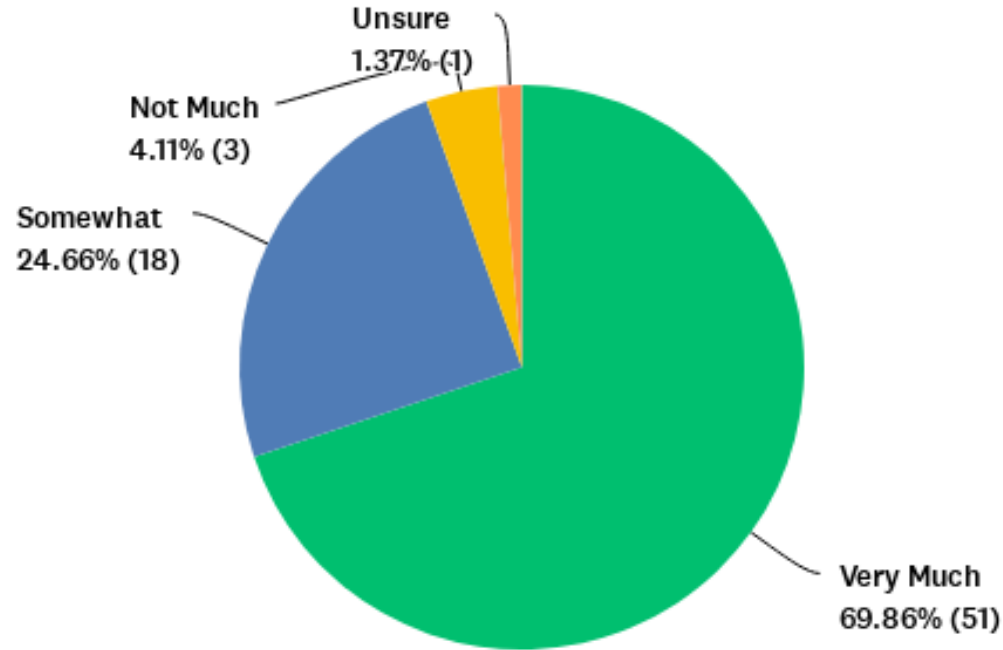
Q16: How comfortable do you feel with talking about your personal faith and religious experiences, as opposed to exchanging opinions, in an online faith-sharing group?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



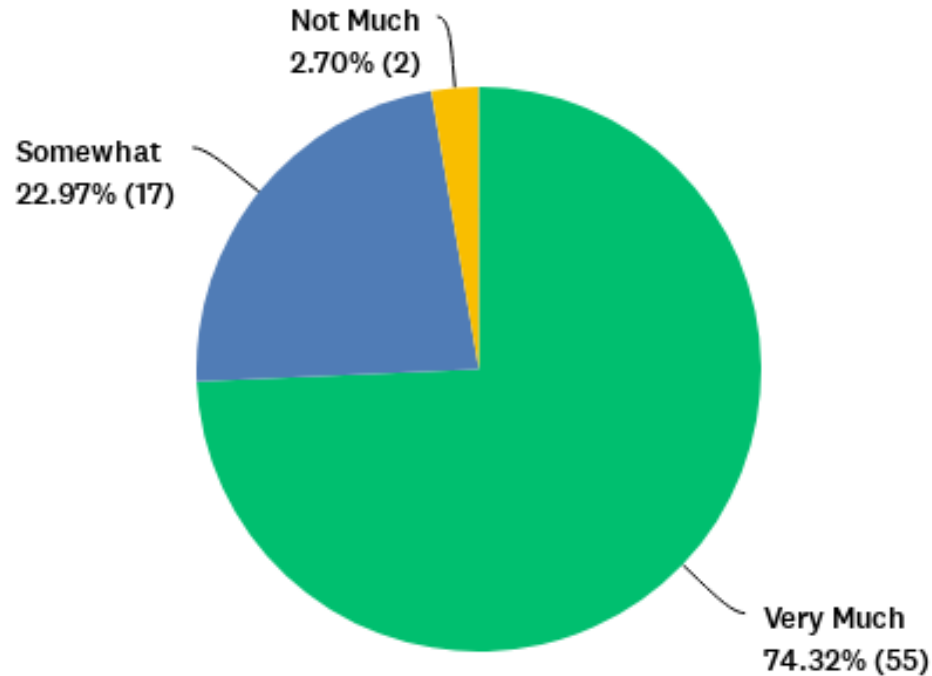
Q17: To what extent does this statement accurately describe your spiritual life?
Statement: “I have a deeply felt sense of God’s love for me even though I am a sinner.”

Answered: 73 Skipped: 1



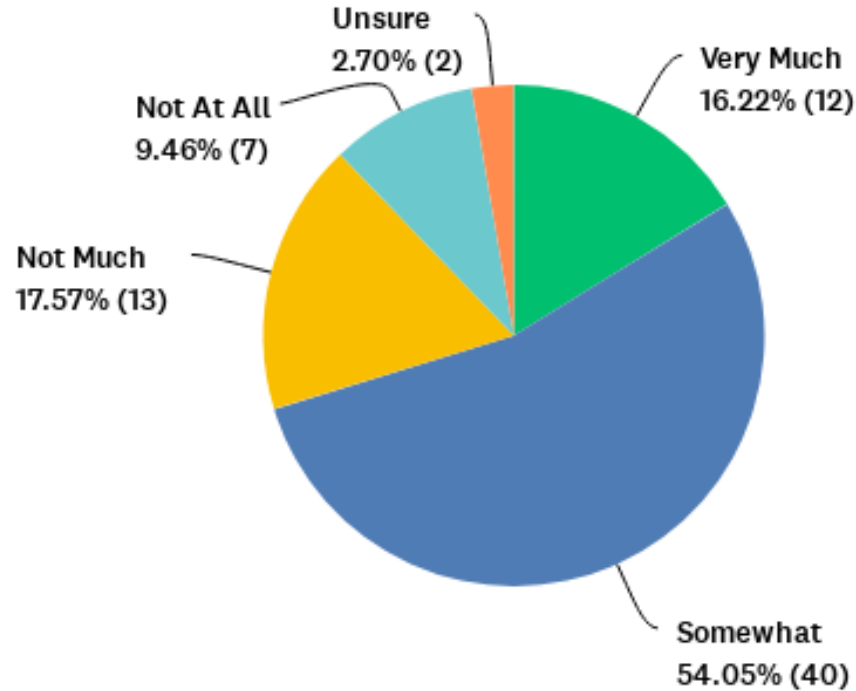
Q18: To what extent does this statement accurately describe your spiritual life?
Statement: “I feel a desire to accompany Jesus and labor with him in his ongoing ministry.”

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



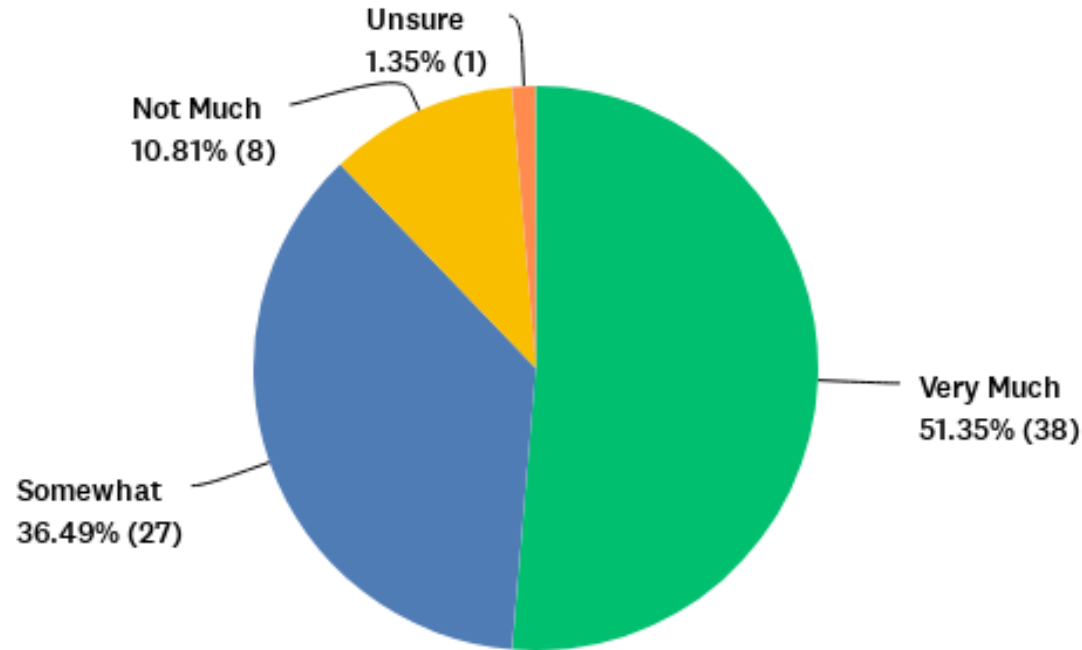
Q19: To what extent does this statement accurately describe your spiritual life?
Statement: “I feel like I have suffered with Jesus on the cross.”

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



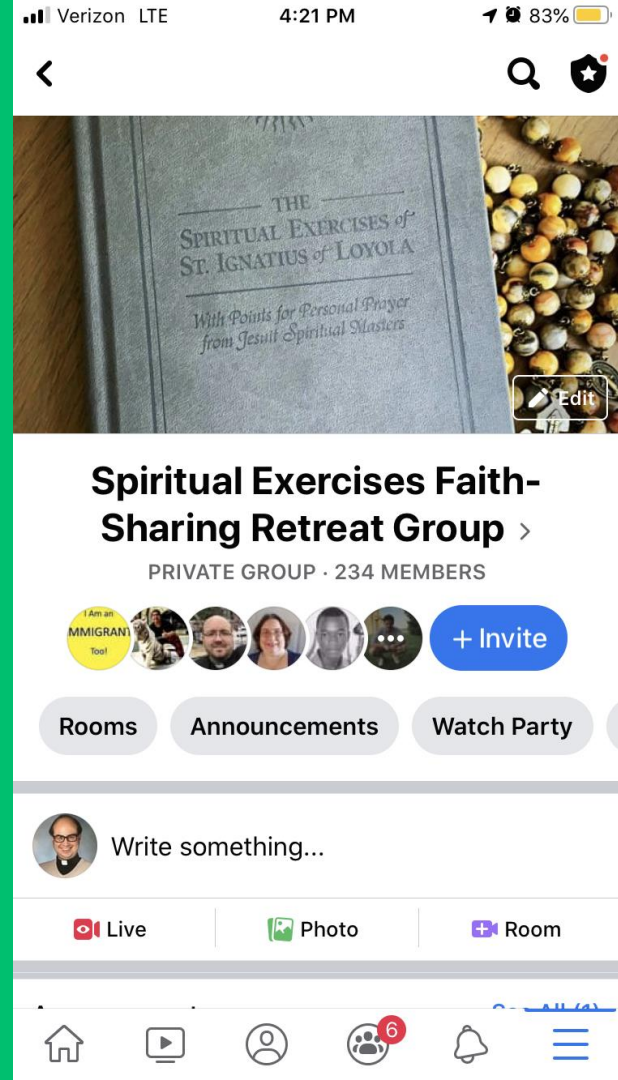
Q20: To what extent does this statement accurately describe your spiritual life?
Statement: “I feel like I have rejoiced with the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, in gratitude for all he gives me.”

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



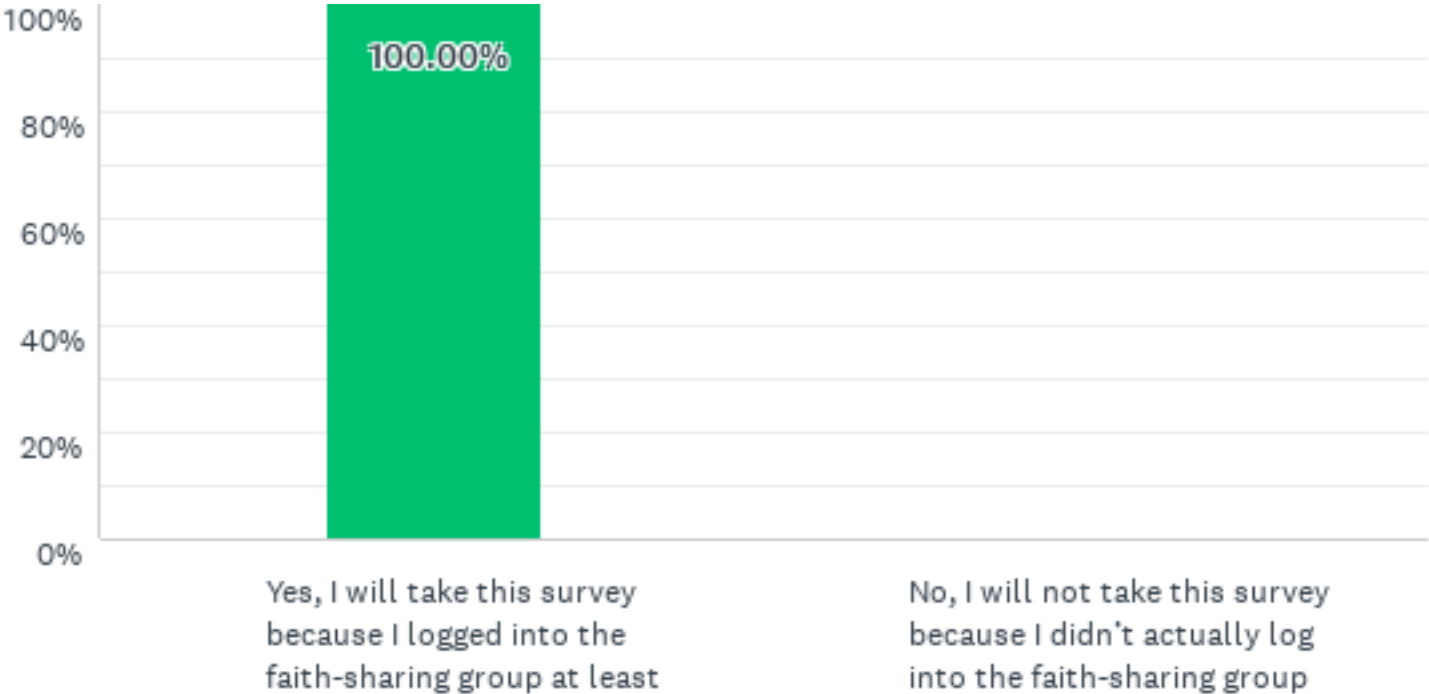
Spiritual Exercises Faith-Sharing Retreat Group Post-Survey Results and Analysis

74 total completed responses



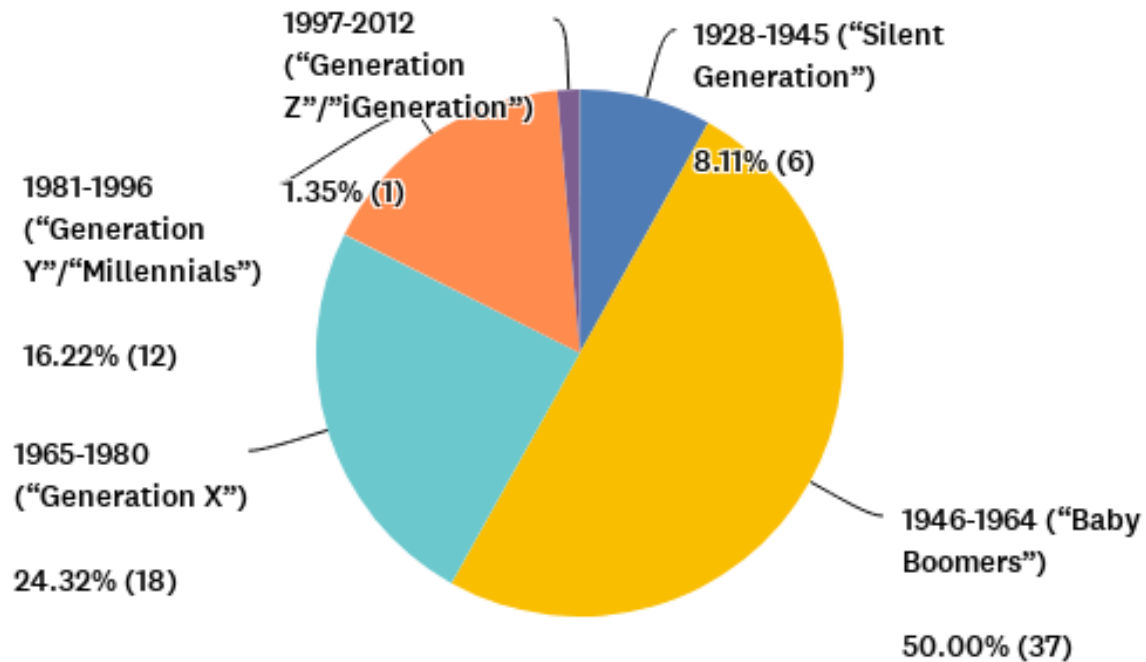
Q1: This survey asks questions about your experience of the online faith-sharing group, based on the 30-day Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius retreat, that you recently completed through the collaboration of America's Facebook page. By continuing with this survey, you confirm that you logged into the faith-sharing group at least once. If you filled out the pre-survey and agreed to the study, but did not end up logging into the group to participate, please select “no” here and scroll to the end to submit this survey without answering any of the other questions.

Answered: 74
Skipped: 0



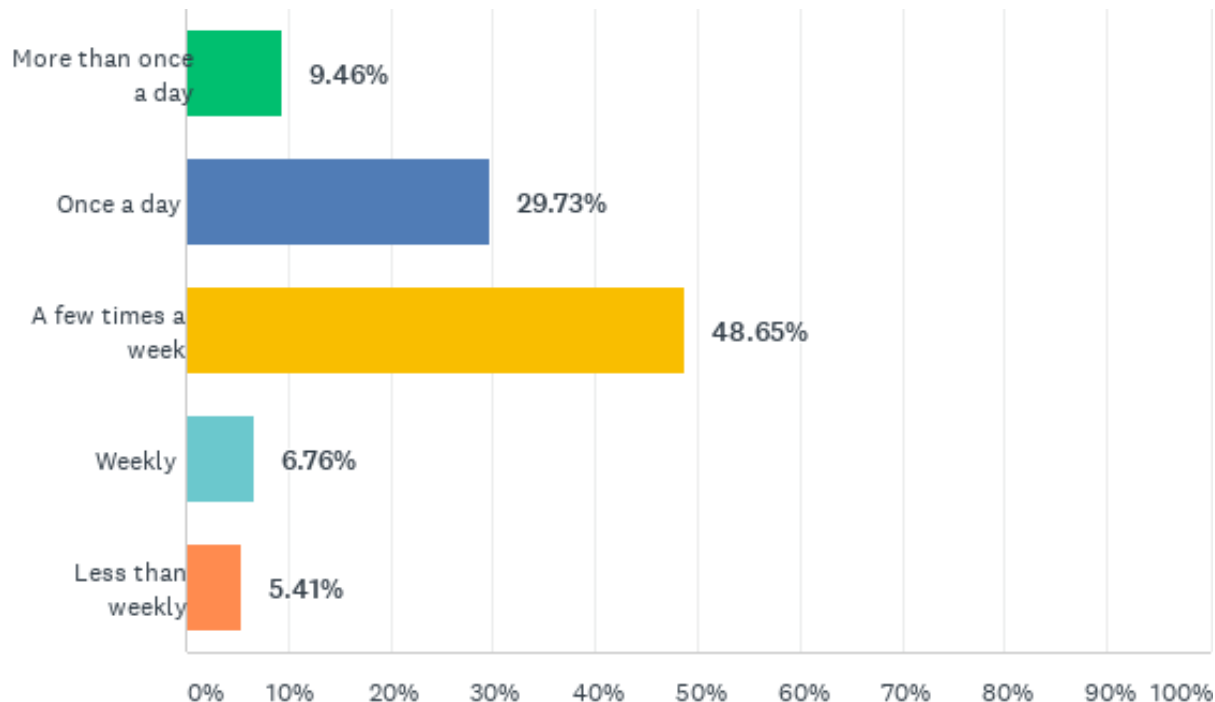
Q2: In which generation were you born?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



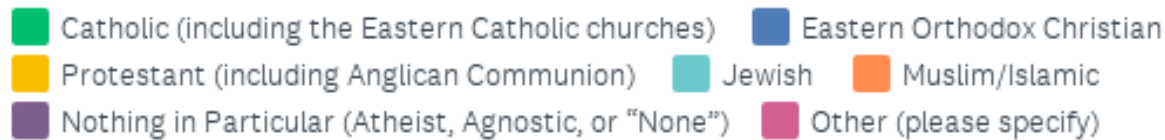
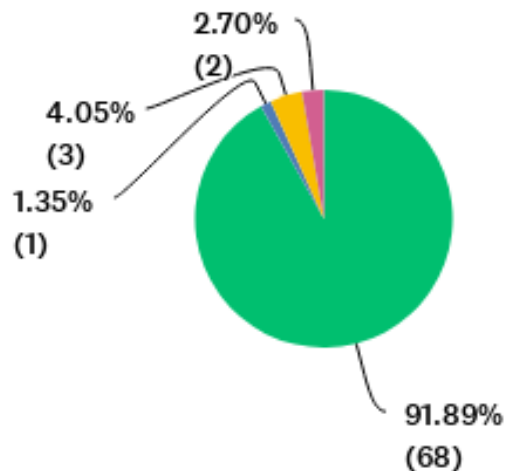
Q3: On average, how often did you log on to this Facebook faith-sharing group each week?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



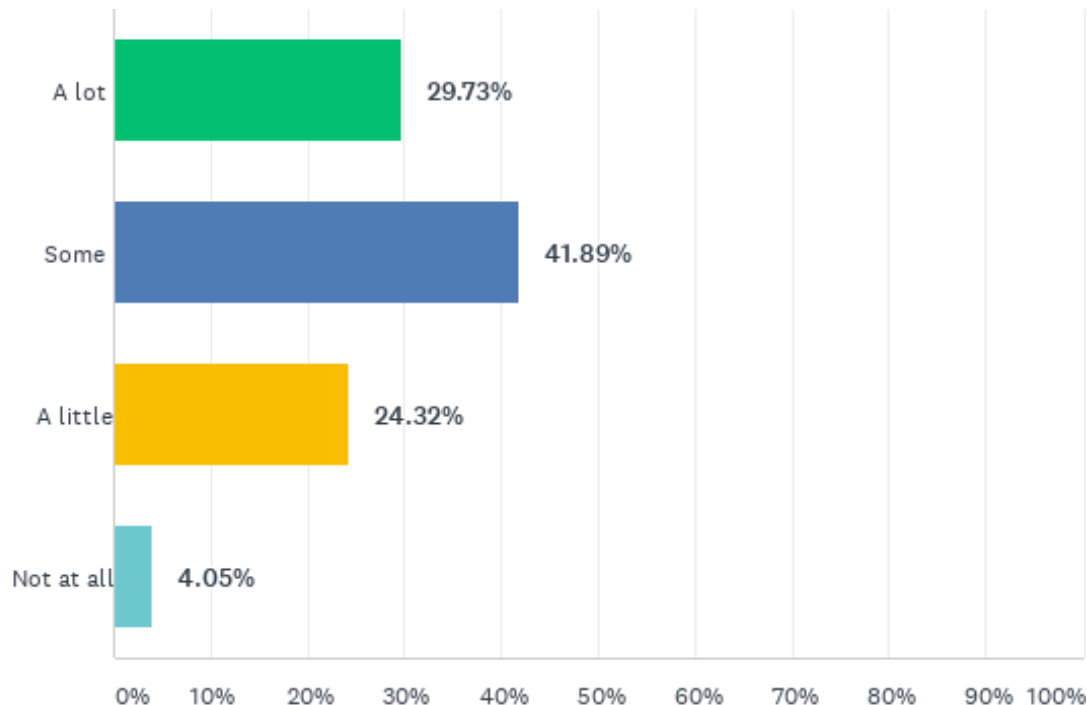
Q4: How would you describe your current religious affiliation?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



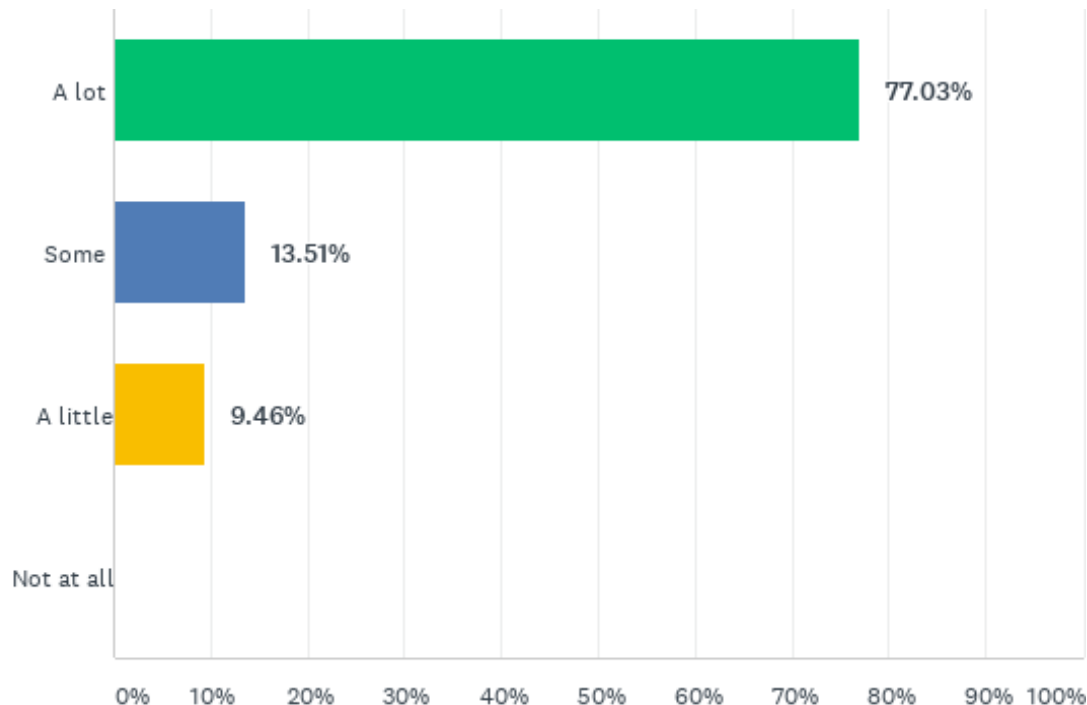
Q5: How strongly did you feel personally connected to this online community during the 30 days of faith-sharing?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



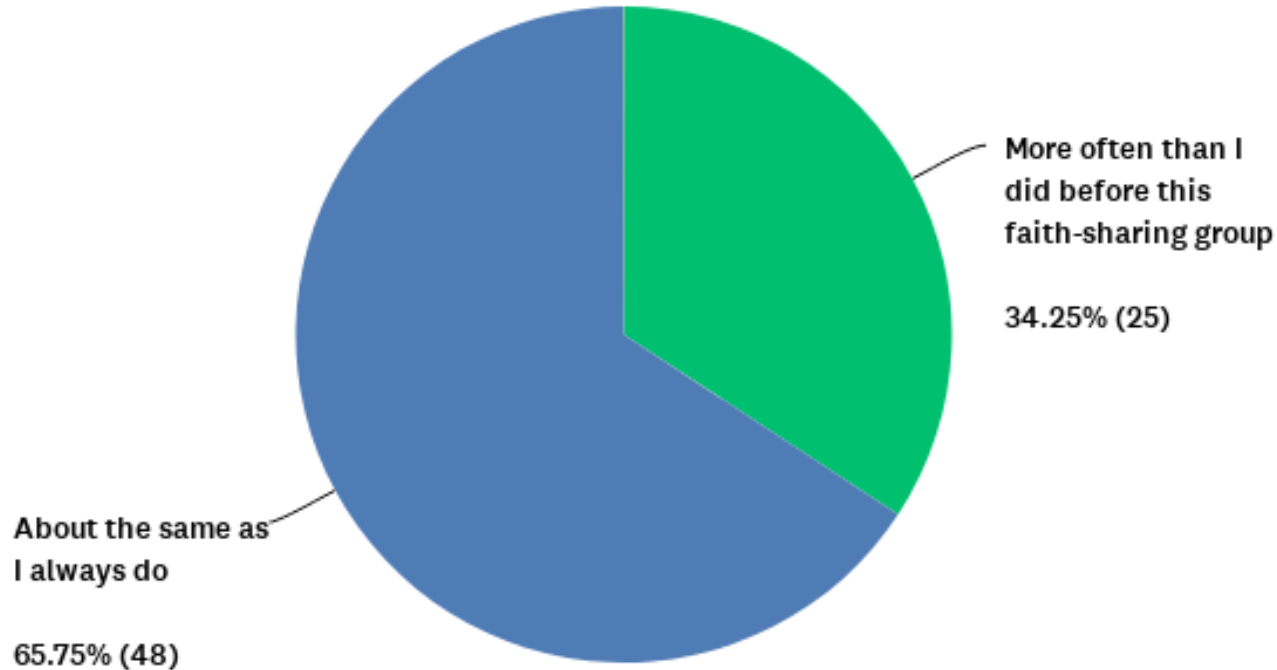
Q6: How strongly did you feel personally connected to a Higher Power as you understand it during the 30 days of faith-sharing?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



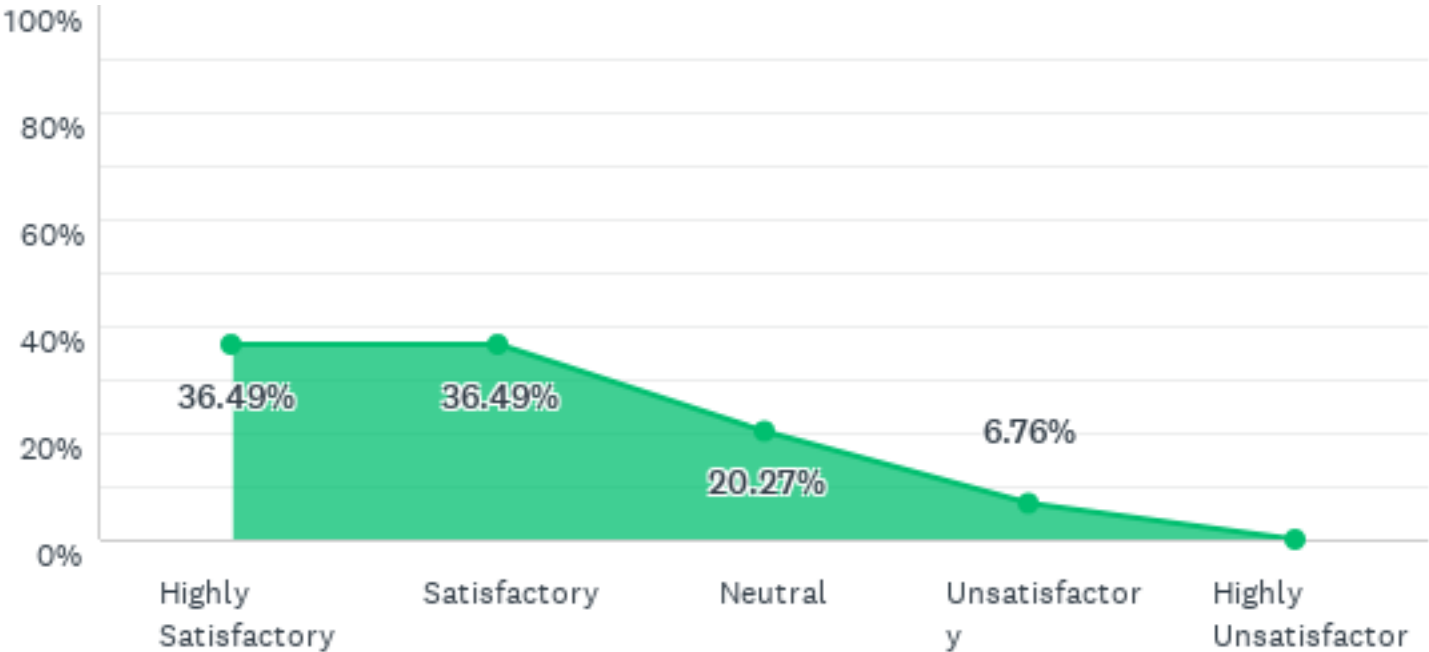
Q7: How often do you intend to attend a religiously sponsored event (funeral, wedding, church service, online discussion, spiritual reading, prayer or meditation group, etc.) moving forward from this faith-sharing group into the future?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 1



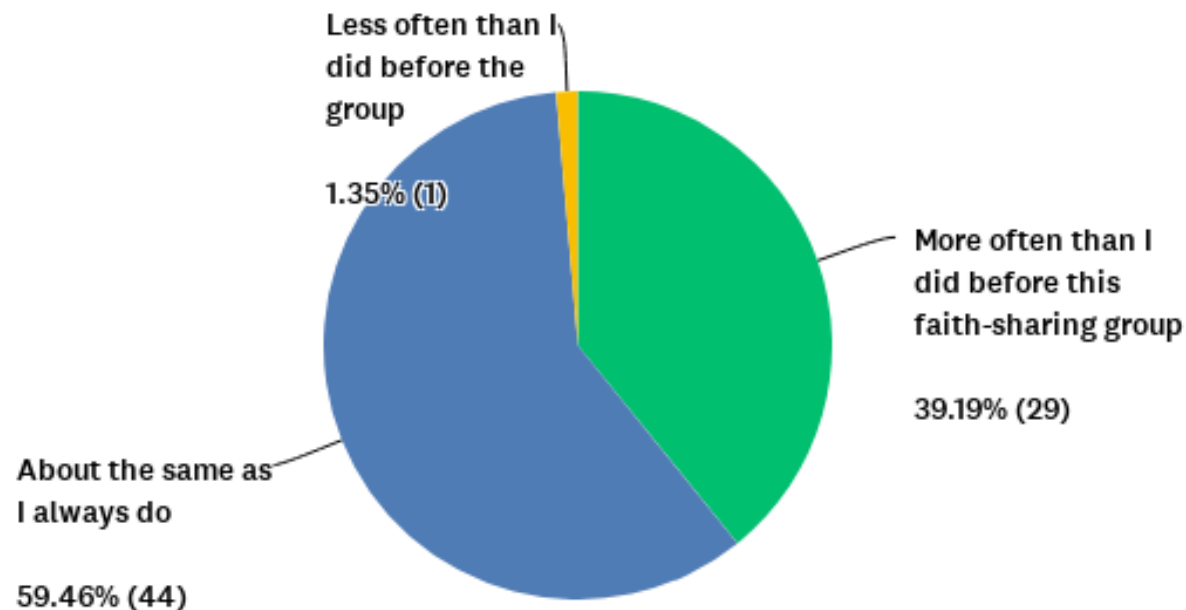
Q8: This online retreat utilized Facebook. How satisfied do you feel about the use of Facebook to facilitate the group interactions?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



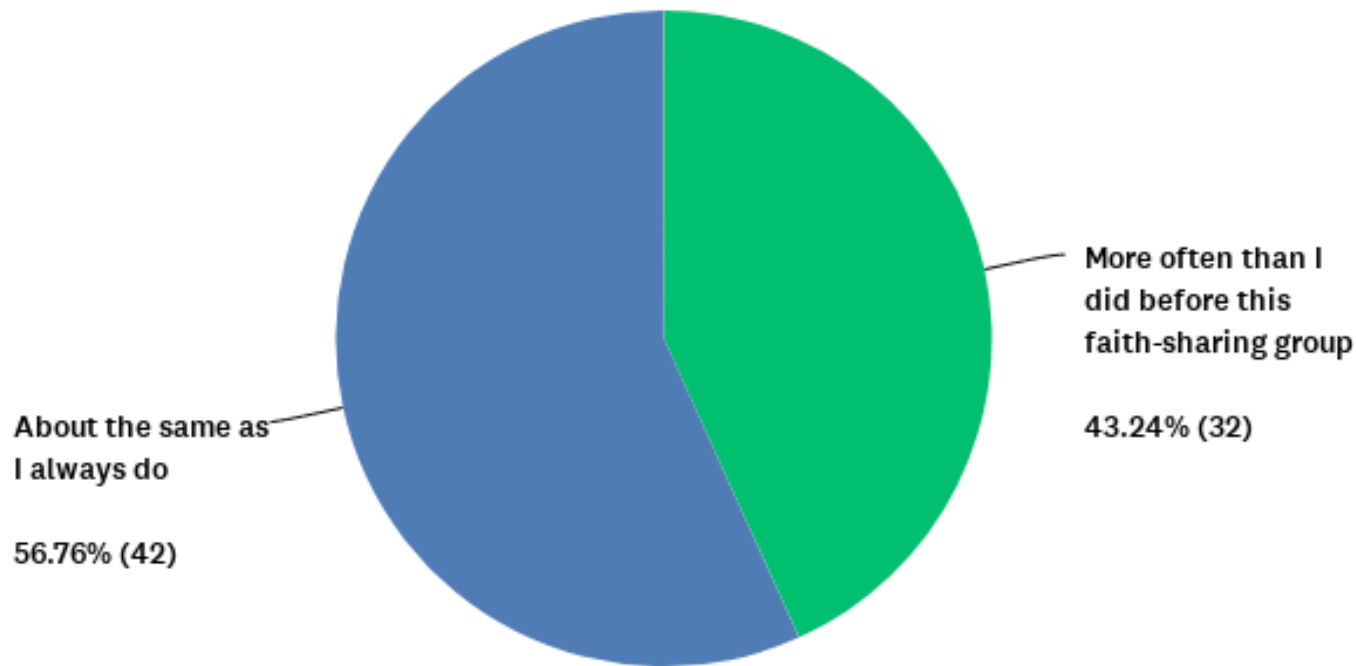
Q9: How likely are you to discuss faith-based content with others online as you move forward from this faith-sharing group into the future?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



Q10: How likely are you to discuss faith-based content with others offline (face-to-face) moving forward from this online faith-sharing group?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



Q11 What particular hopes or desires did you find were fulfilled in this experience? Please write them in the space below.

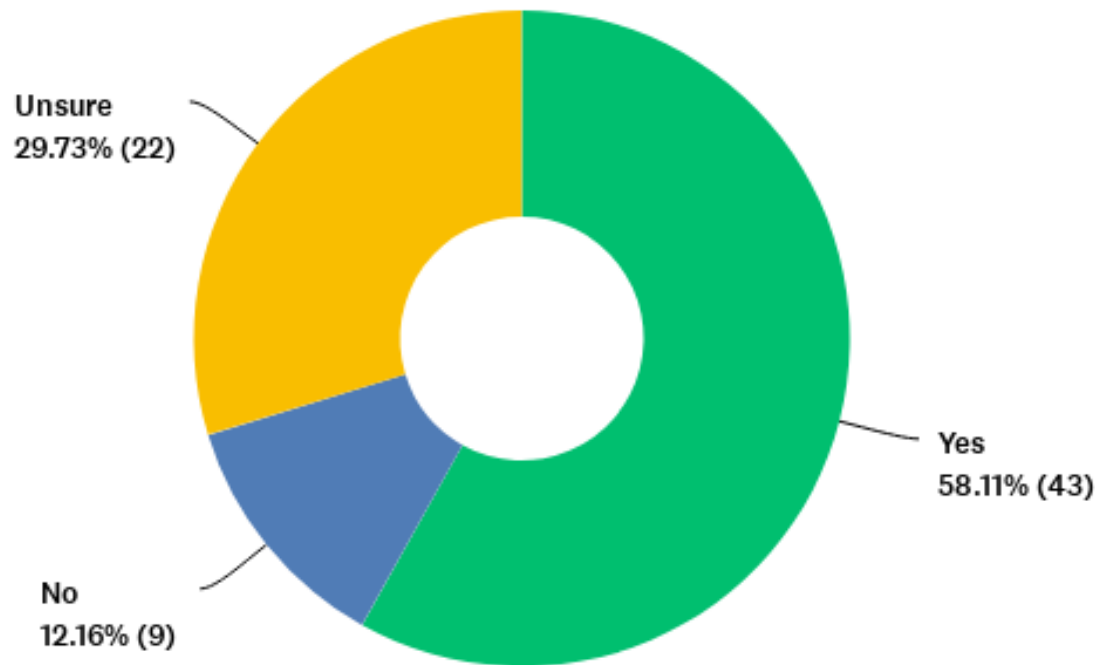
learning connection God also strengthen Jesus Deepening love practicing
able connected faith closer God prayer Lord helped connection
hoped spiritual exercises experience relationship God
God grow retreat Ignatian Spirituality life way
wanted deeper found prayer life understanding God s
better hope feel time day helpful community desires fulfilled
exercises Learn St Ignatius desire spiritual

Q12 Other than Facebook, is there another digital media format you would suggest that America use for an online faith-sharing group? Please write your suggestion in the blank. If you do not write anything, your answer will be recorded as "no suggestion."

use website might retreat present found group social media worked
meeting Facebook community Zoom comments
suggestion Instagram people Twitter well need know Microsoft Teams
Maybe Youtube

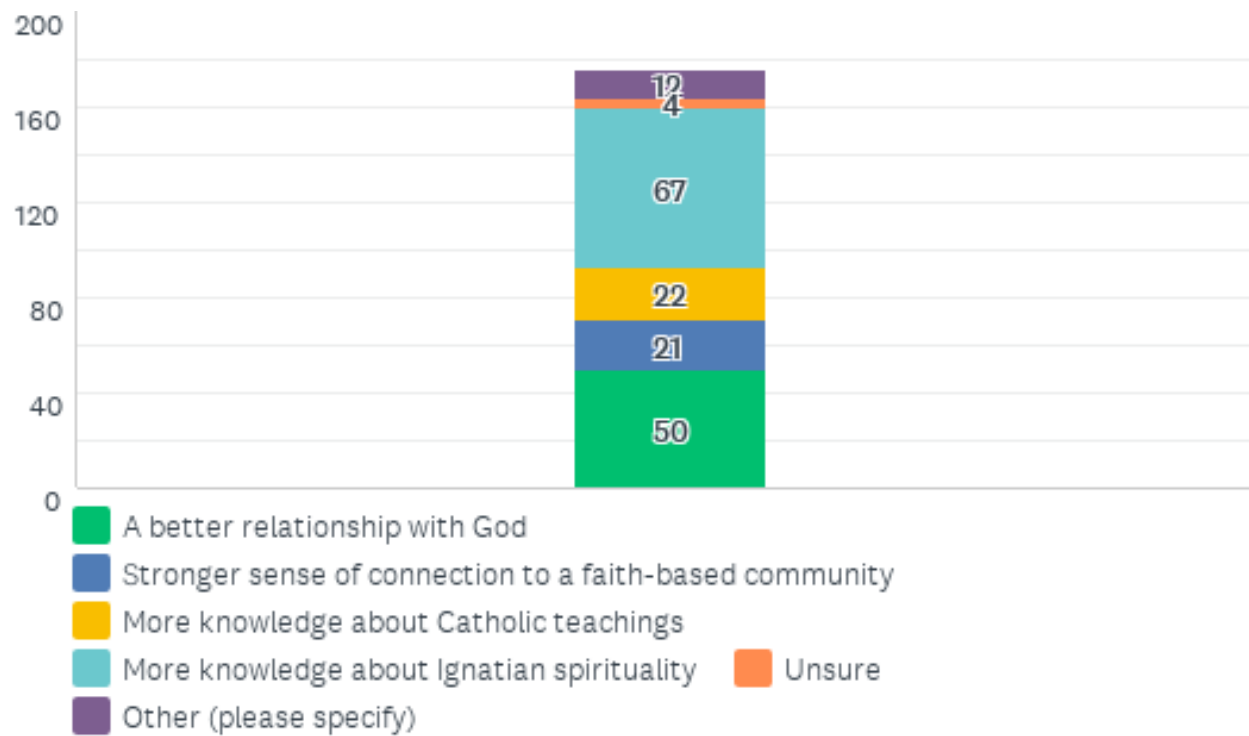
Q13: Do you consider this Facebook faith-sharing group to have been a type of “real” community?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



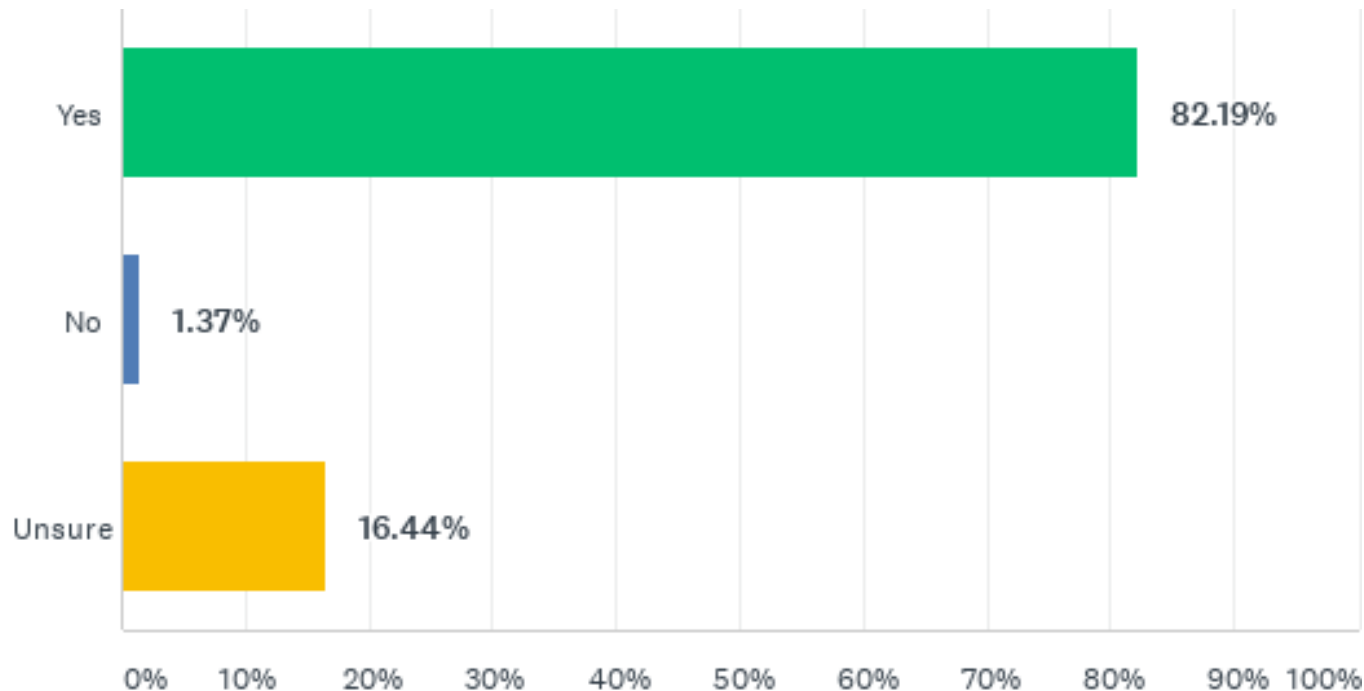
Q14: What outcomes did you see in your spiritual life at the end of this online faith-sharing group? Please choose all that apply

Answered: 73 Skipped: 1



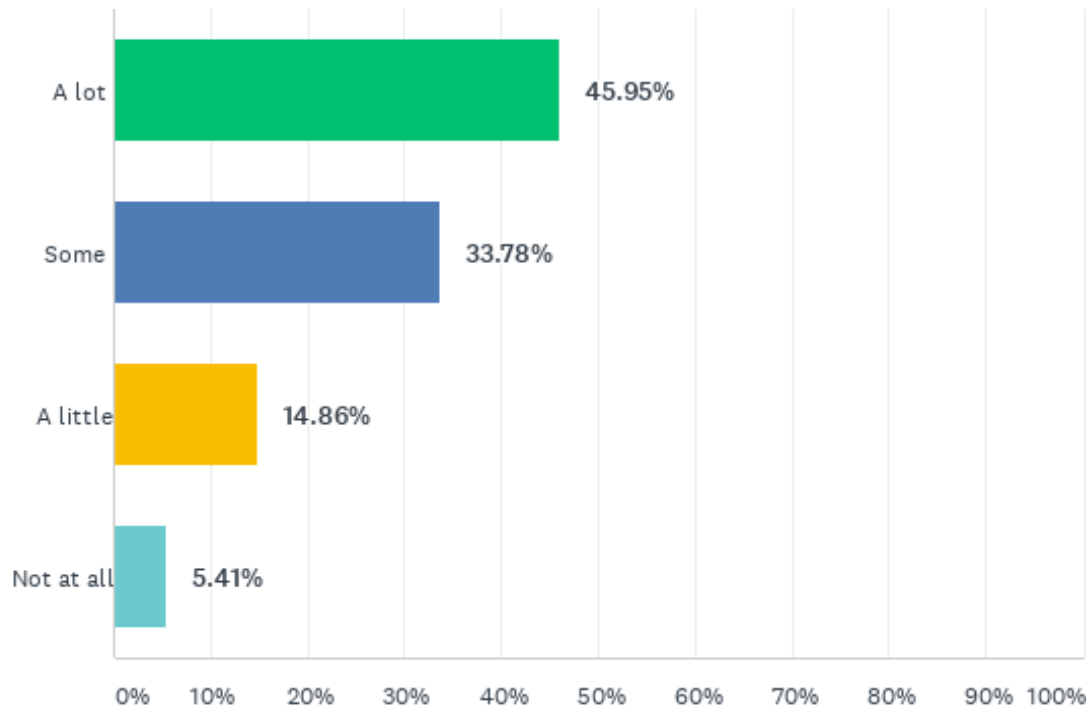
Q15: Based on this experience, would you be interested in participating in another online faith-sharing group at the America Media Facebook page?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 1



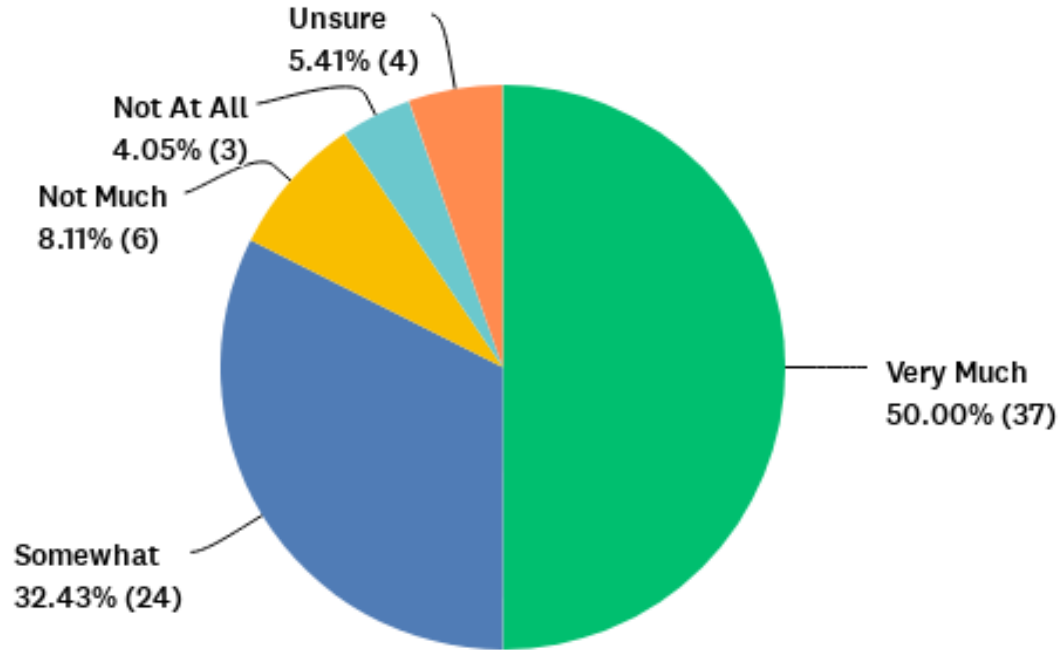
Q16: How comfortable did you feel talking about your personal faith and religious experiences, as opposed to exchanging opinions, in this Facebook group?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



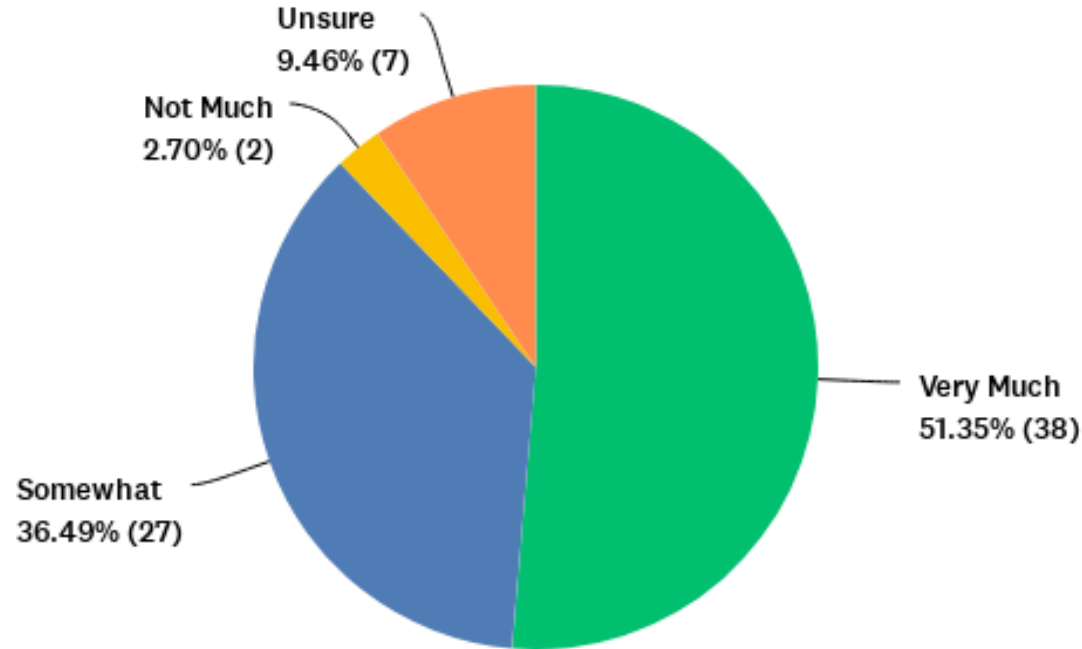
Q17: To what extent does this statement accurately describe the grace you received in Week One of the retreat? Statement: “I grew in a deeply felt sense of God’s love for me even though I am a sinner.”

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



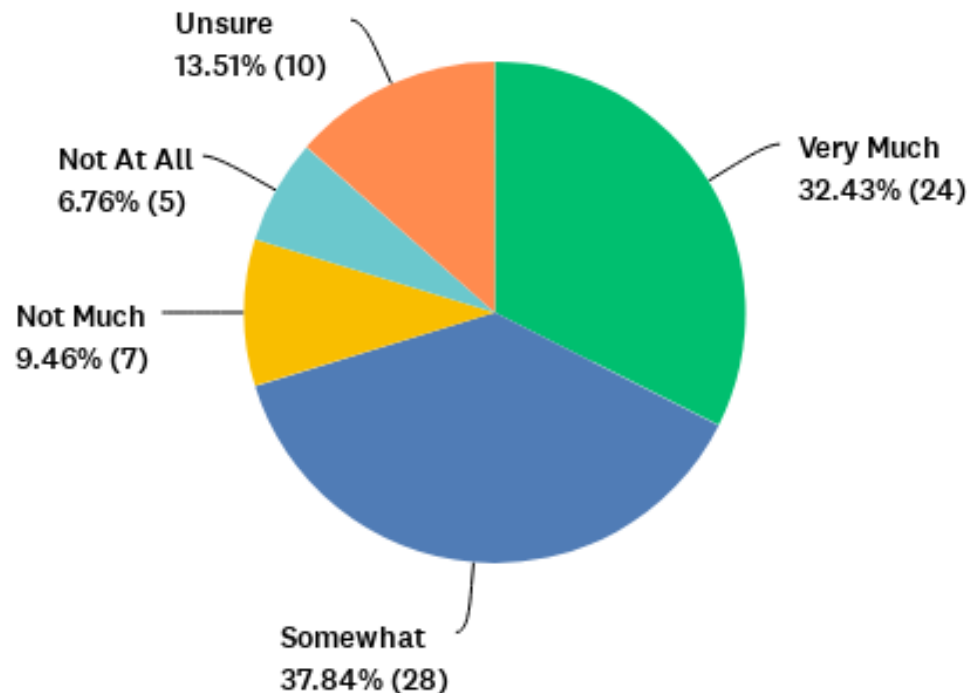
Q18: To what extent does this statement accurately describe the grace you received in Week Two of the retreat? Statement: “I grew in my desire to accompany Jesus and labor with him in his ongoing ministry.”

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



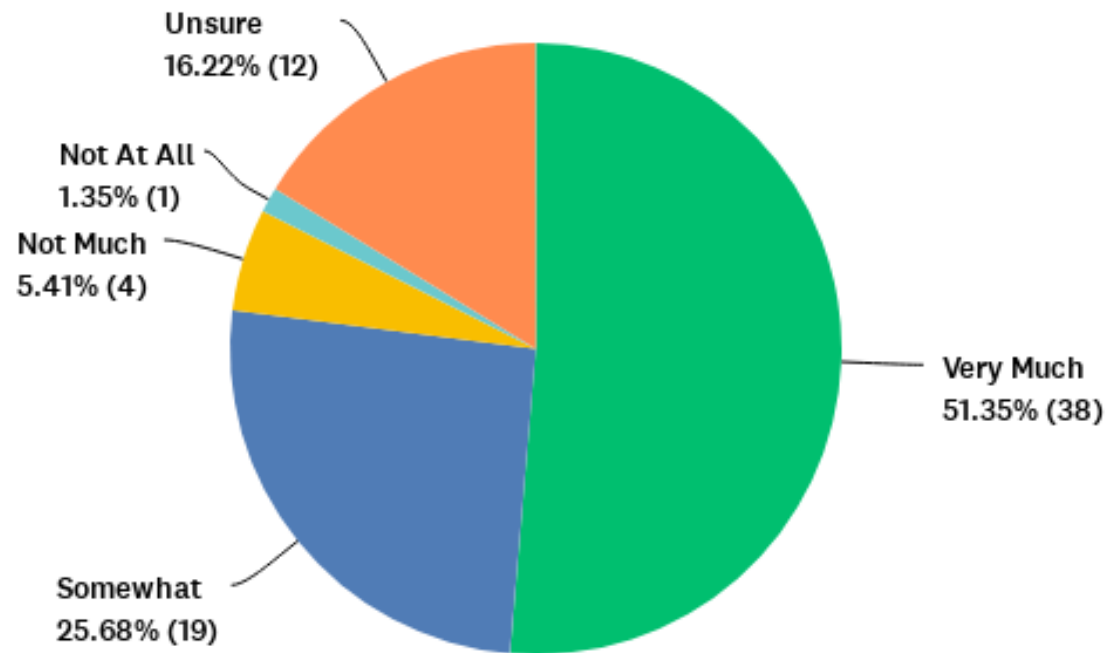
Q19: To what extent does this statement accurately describe the grace you received in Week Three of the retreat? Statement: “I experienced a stronger desire to suffer with Jesus on the cross.”

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



Q20: To what extent does this statement accurately describe the grace you received in Week Four of the retreat? Statement: “I rejoiced more deeply with the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, in gratitude for all he gives me.”

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



Key Pre-Retreat Survey Conclusions by Generation

Generated Sunday, January 24, 2021

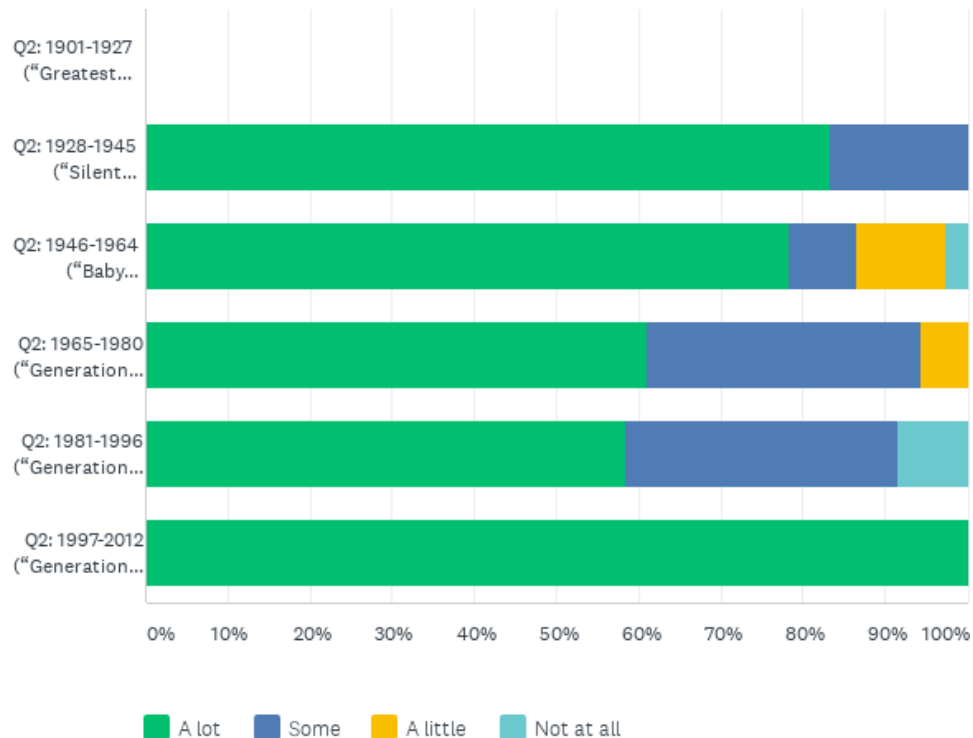
Q4: How would you describe your current religious affiliation?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0

	CATHOLIC (INCLUDING THE EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES)	EASTERN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN	PROTESTANT (INCLUDING ANGLICAN COMMUNION)	JEWISH	MUSLIM/ISLAMIC	NOTHING IN PARTICULAR (ATHEIST, AGNOSTIC, OR "NONE")	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	TOTAL
Q2: 1901-1927 ("Greatest Generation")	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Q2: 1928-1945 ("Silent Generation")	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.11% 6
Q2: 1946-1964 ("Baby Boomers")	89.19% 33	2.70% 1	2.70% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.41% 2	50.00% 37
Q2: 1965-1980 ("Generation X")	94.44% 17	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	24.32% 18
Q2: 1981-1996 ("Generation Y"/"Millennials")	100.00% 12	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.22% 12
Q2: 1997-2012 ("Generation Z")/"iGeneration")	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1.35% 1
Total Respondents	68	1	3	0	0	0	2	74

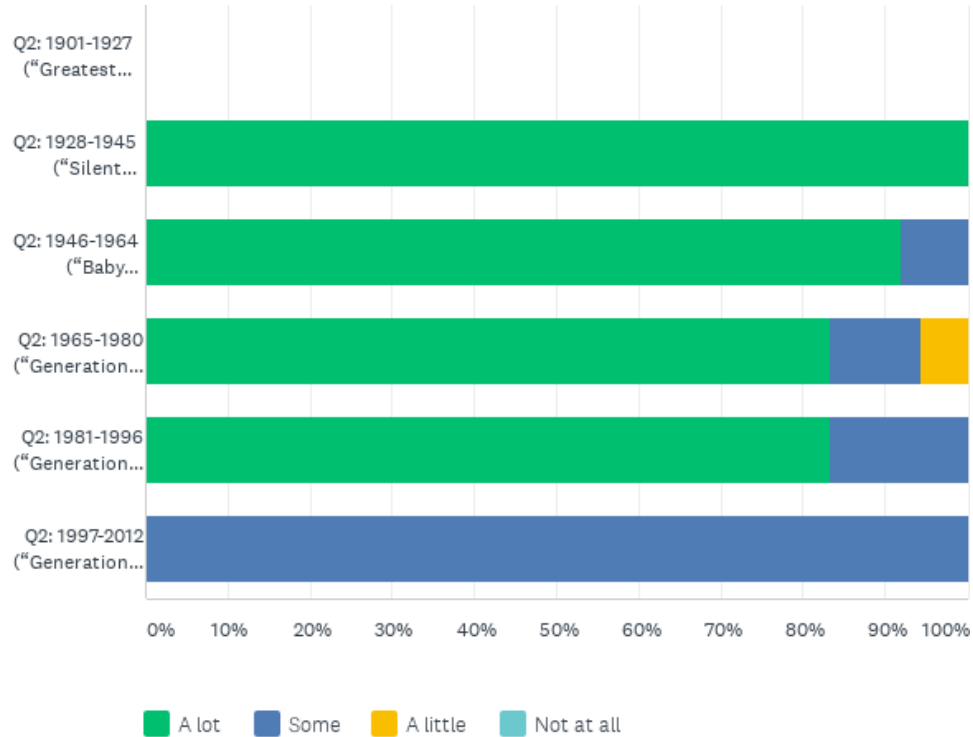
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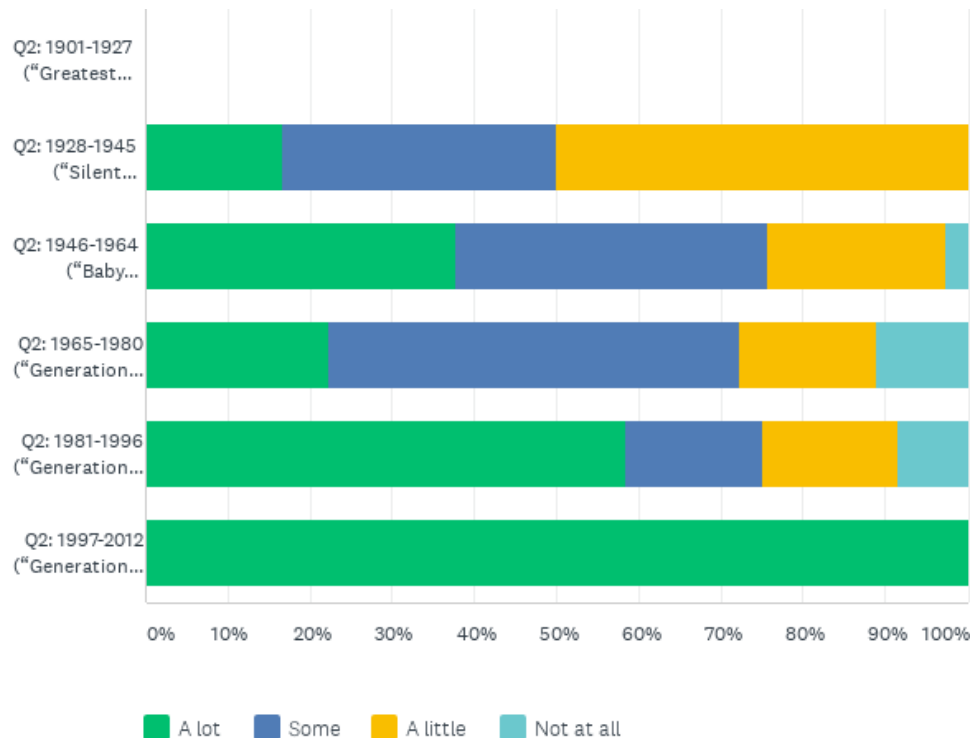
Q6: How strongly do you feel personally connected to a Higher Power as you understand it?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



Q9: How much, if at all, have you shared your faith with others online during your life?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0

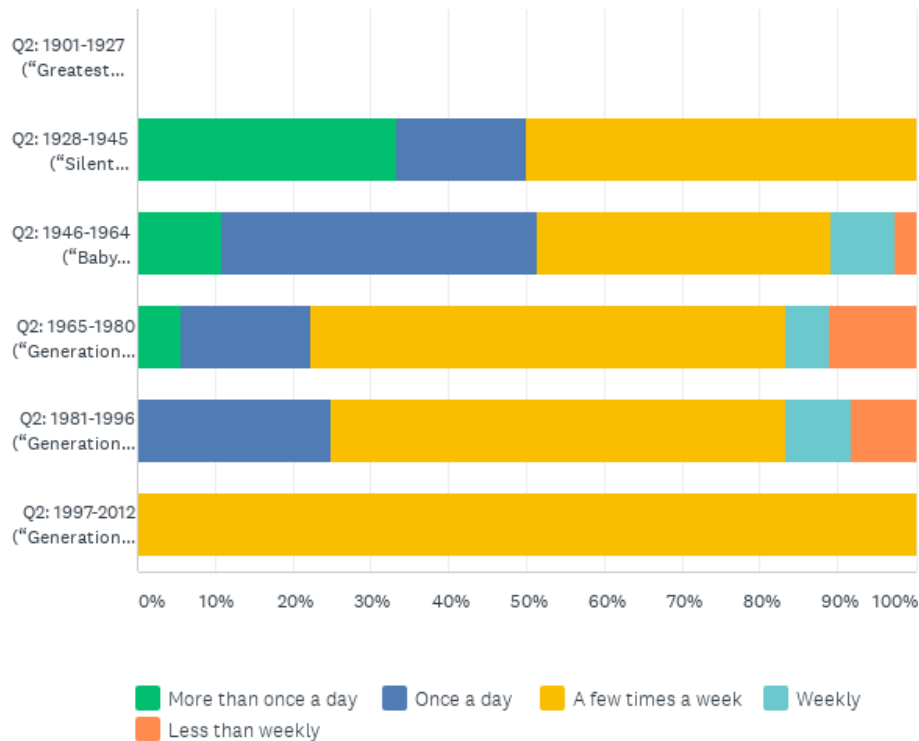


Key Post-Retreat Survey Conclusions by Generation

Generated Friday, December 04, 2020

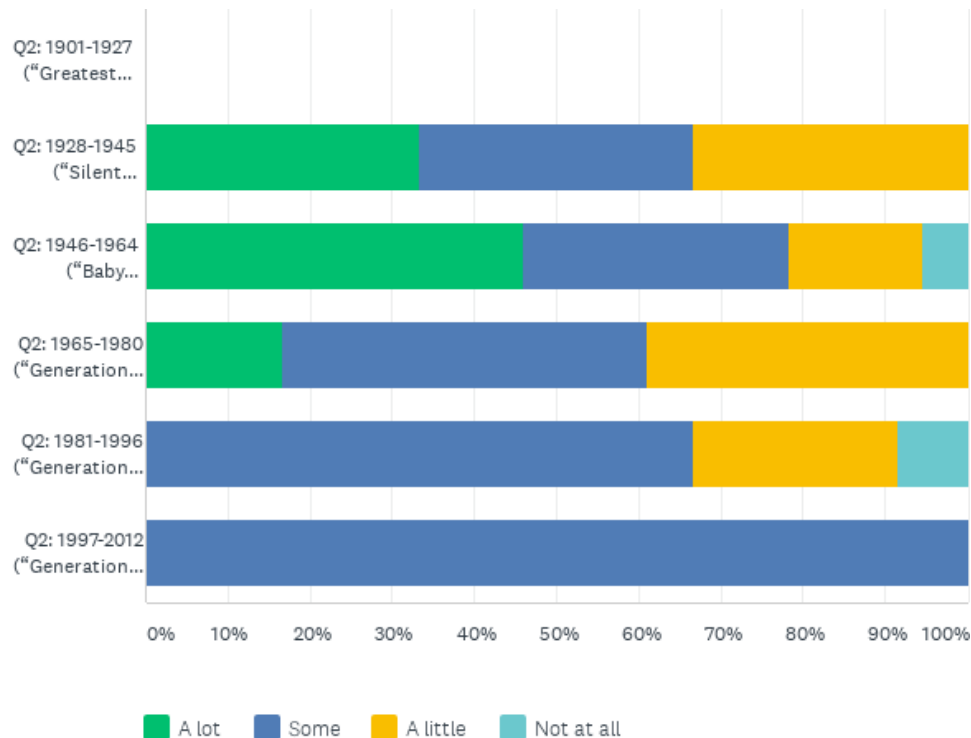
Q3: On average, how often did you log on to this Facebook faith-sharing group each week?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



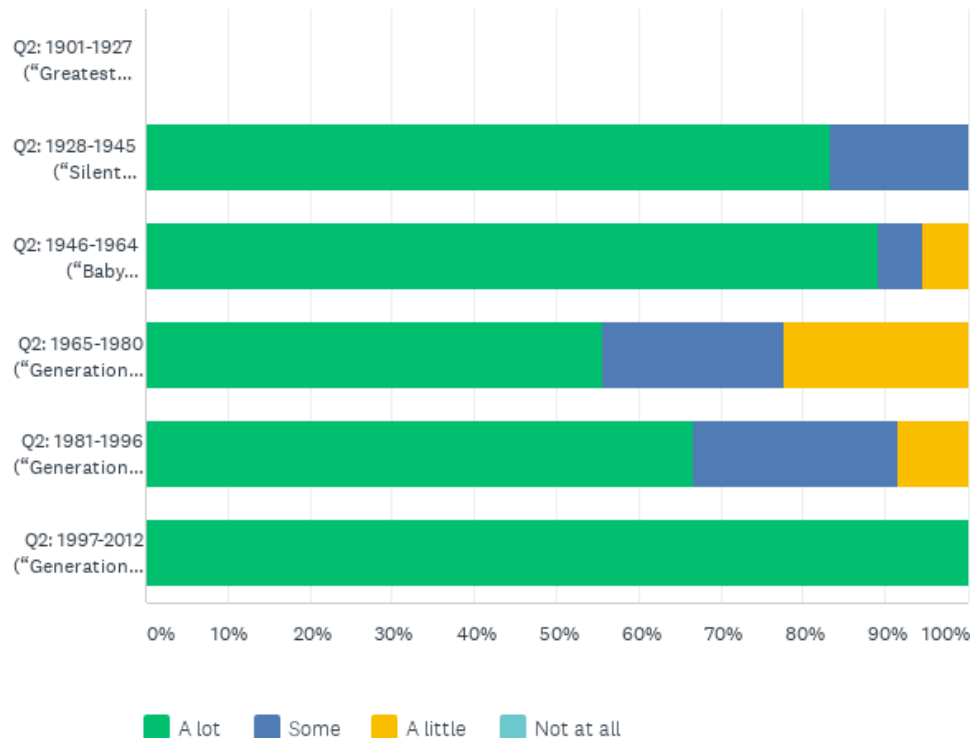
Q5: How strongly did you feel personally connected to this online community during the 30 days of faith-sharing?

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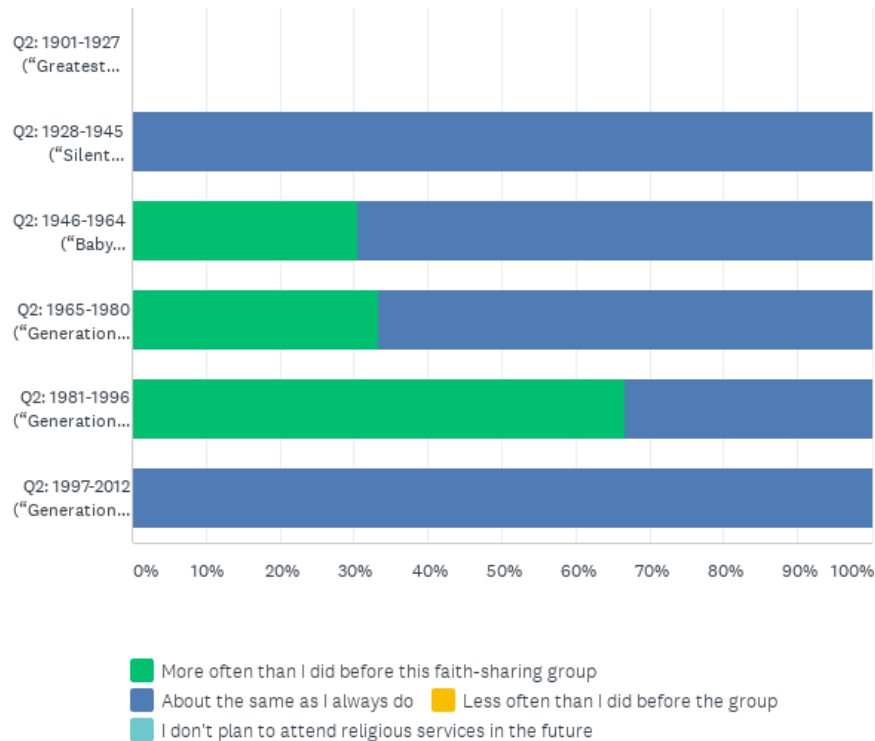
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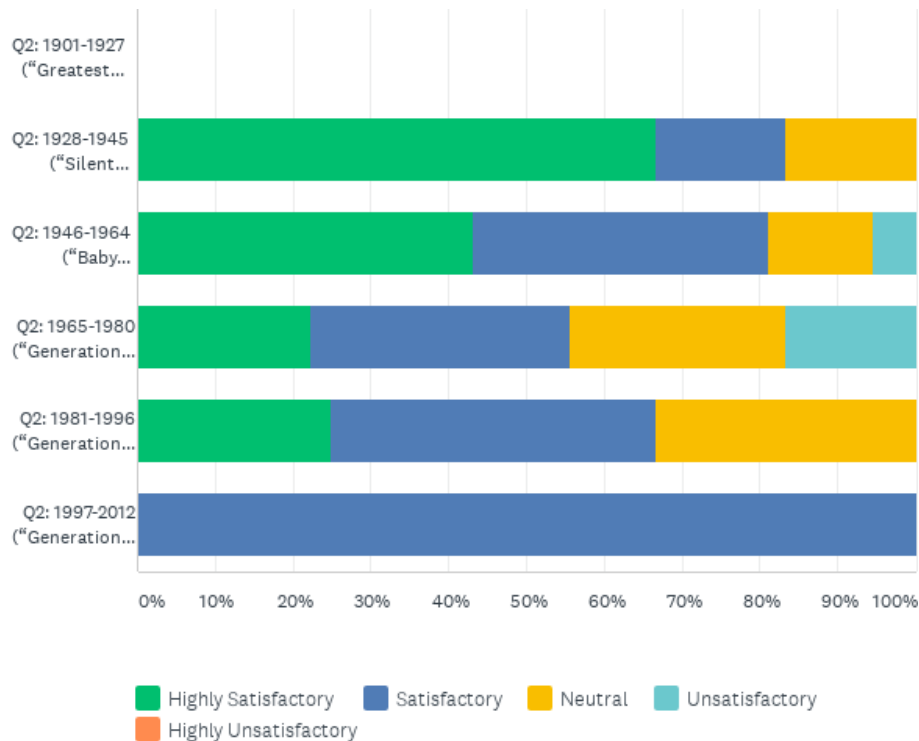
Q7: How often do you intend to attend a religiously sponsored event (funeral, wedding, church service, online discussion, spiritual reading, prayer or meditation group, etc.) moving forward from this faith-sharing group into the future?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 1



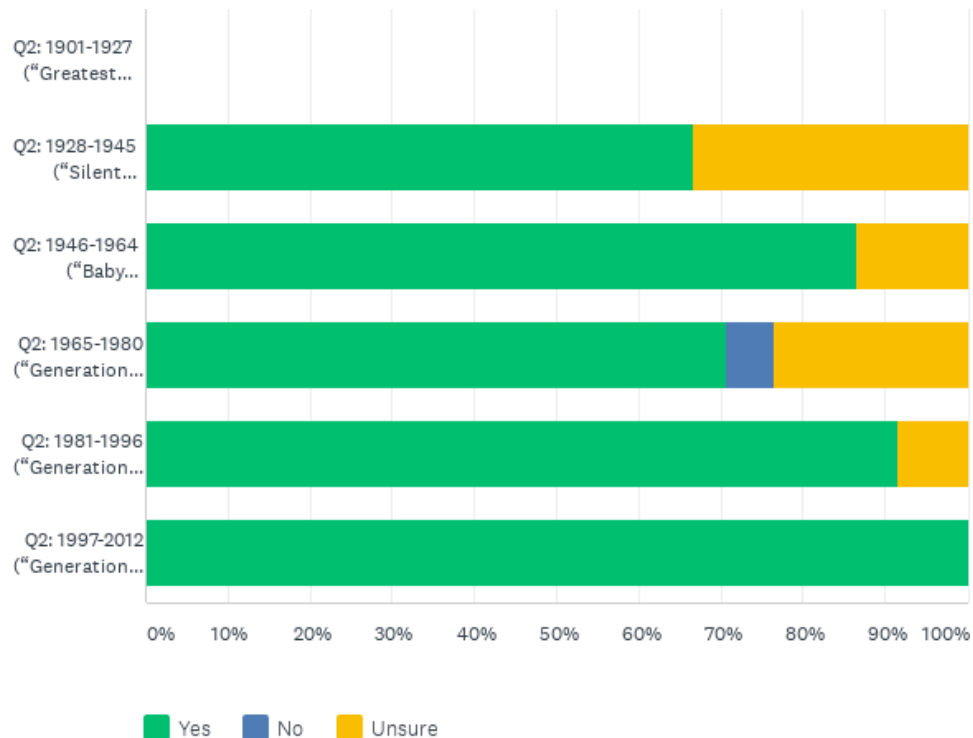
Q8: This online retreat utilized Facebook. How satisfied do you feel about the use of Facebook to facilitate the group interactions?

Answered: 74 Skipped: 0



Q15: Based on this experience, would you be interested in participating in another online faith-sharing group at the America Media Facebook page?




Answered: 73 Skipped: 1






Conclusions and Recommendations


- **What Was Successful:** The Project was moderately effective at uniting 74 participants of different generations in a single positive online faith-sharing retreat that connected people.
- **What Did Not Go as Well as Expected:** The Project did not reach a critical number of Millennials, negating its ability to generalize many conclusions about that cohort.
- **Additional Adjustments for the Future:** The Project must reach outside of *America* circles into the digital enclaves of disaffiliated young people, including other social networks.


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 **Sean Salai SJ** was live.  Admin · 41m · 







Good morning everyone! Since our faith-sharing group is asynchronous, meaning we won't gather "live" from all of the global time zones we represent, you don't have to worry about seeing my videos when they stream live or scheduling a certain time to be here. Just watch the videos anytime you like, even on a different day, and share your filmed or w... See More



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Final Takeaways

- When believers share their faith online in response to Catholic media content, as opposed to merely viewing videos for privatized consumption and journaling, positive things happen in their shift toward a more communal notion of retreat.
- Because it recruited primarily through existing *America Media* Facebook groups, this Project primarily reached older women with a pre-existing interest in Ignatian spirituality, making it more effective as a remote preparation to evangelize disaffiliated emerging adults than as an example of this outreach in itself.
- Reflecting its general success at building shared knowledge and experiences of Ignatian spirituality in an asynchronous online setting, future iterations of this Project will do well to focus more on interpersonal and intergenerational dynamics than on specific weekly aims for the individual relationship with God, exploring newer young adult-favored platforms like Instagram as venues for invitation.