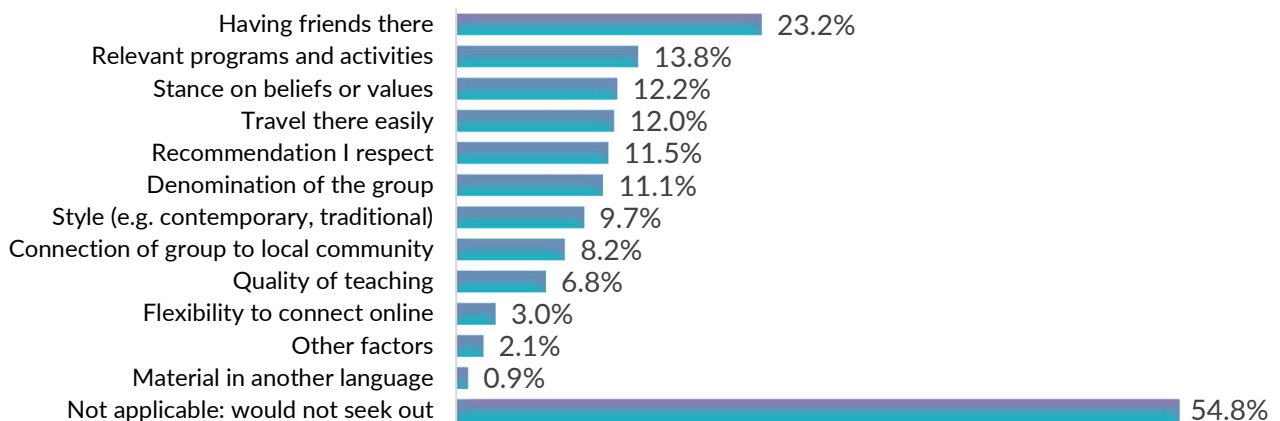


# Influences in choosing a church or other religious group to connect with

## Friends are the most important influence

'Having friends who belong to this group' is the most common quality that Australians say would influence them if they were seeking a religious congregation to connect with. Almost a quarter of Australians cited this as one of their top influences.

If you were to seek out a new connection with a religious congregation, what would most influence which group you chose?

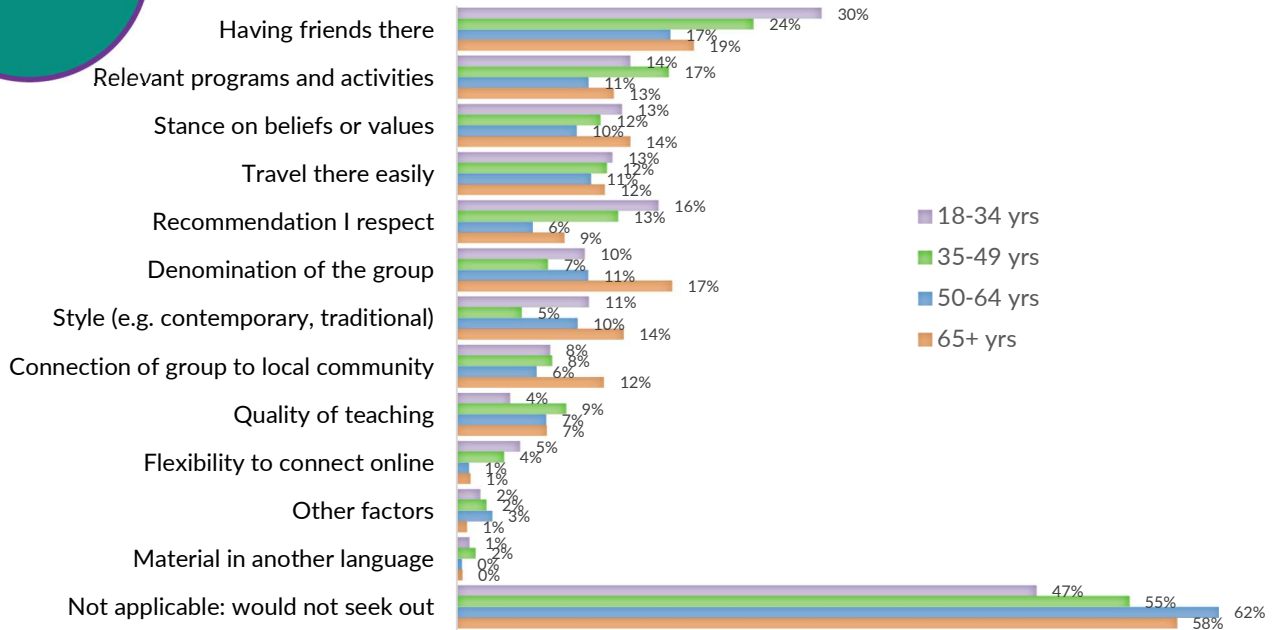


Source: 2020 ACS (n = 1,306). Respondents could choose up to 4 options.

- Age** Youngest (18-34) are the most open to seeking out a connection, and more likely to cite having friends there, and a recommendation from a source they respect as influential.
- Gender** Women and men similar on most influences, but men more likely to say they would seek out a new connection, and cite having friends there as an influence.
- Education** Those with degree education are more likely to seek out a new connection with a church, and more likely to cite all of the first 6 influences as more important.
- Religion** Non-Christian (i.e. other religions) and non-attending Christians are equally likely to seek out a new connection.
- Spirituality Cluster** Over two-thirds of those who are spiritual but not religious (SBNR) are unlikely to seek out a new connection, while about three-quarters are of those who are neither spiritual or religious.

Age

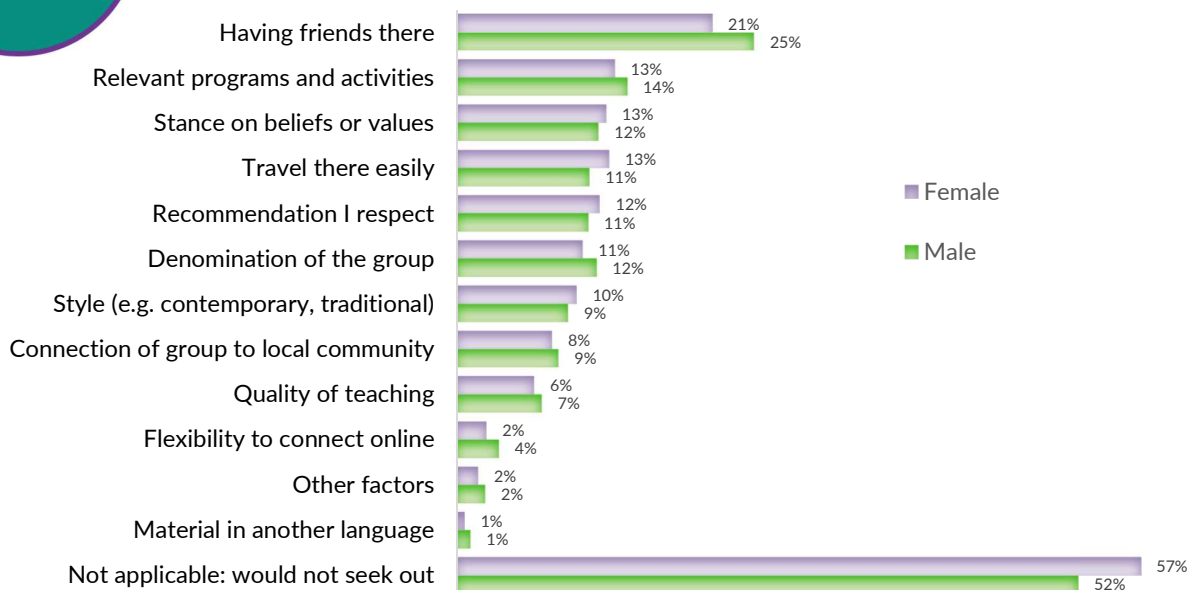
Influences on seeking connection with a religious congregation, by age group



Source: 2020 ACS (n = 1,306). Respondents could choose up to 4 options.

Gender

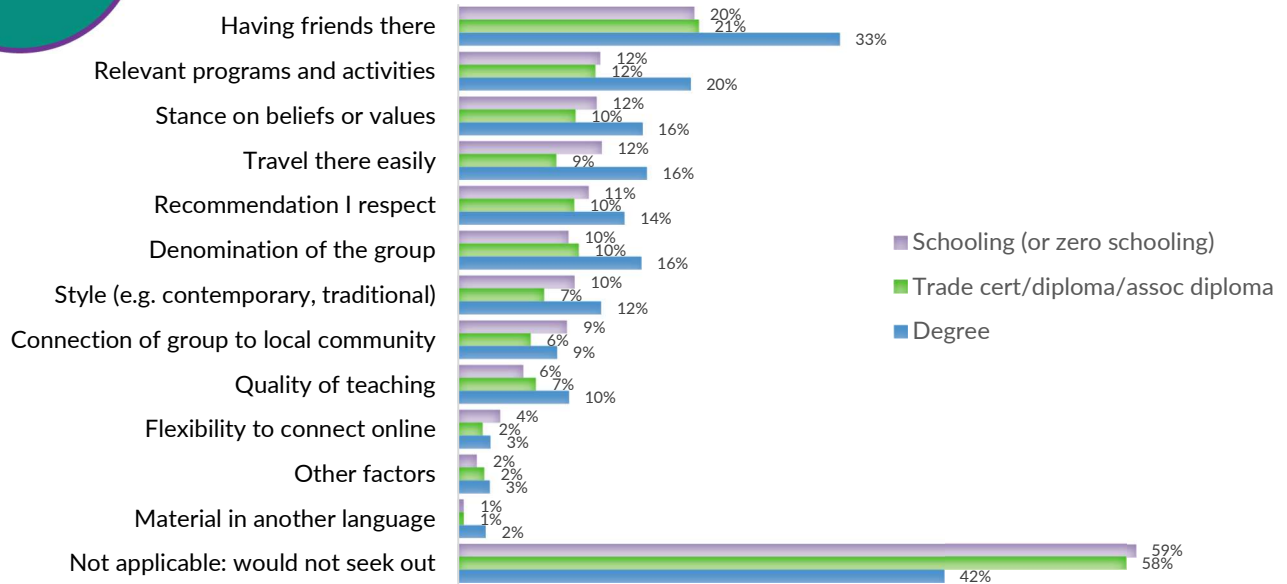
Influences on seeking connection with a religious congregation, by gender



Source: 2020 ACS (n = 1,306). Respondents could choose up to 4 options.

## Education

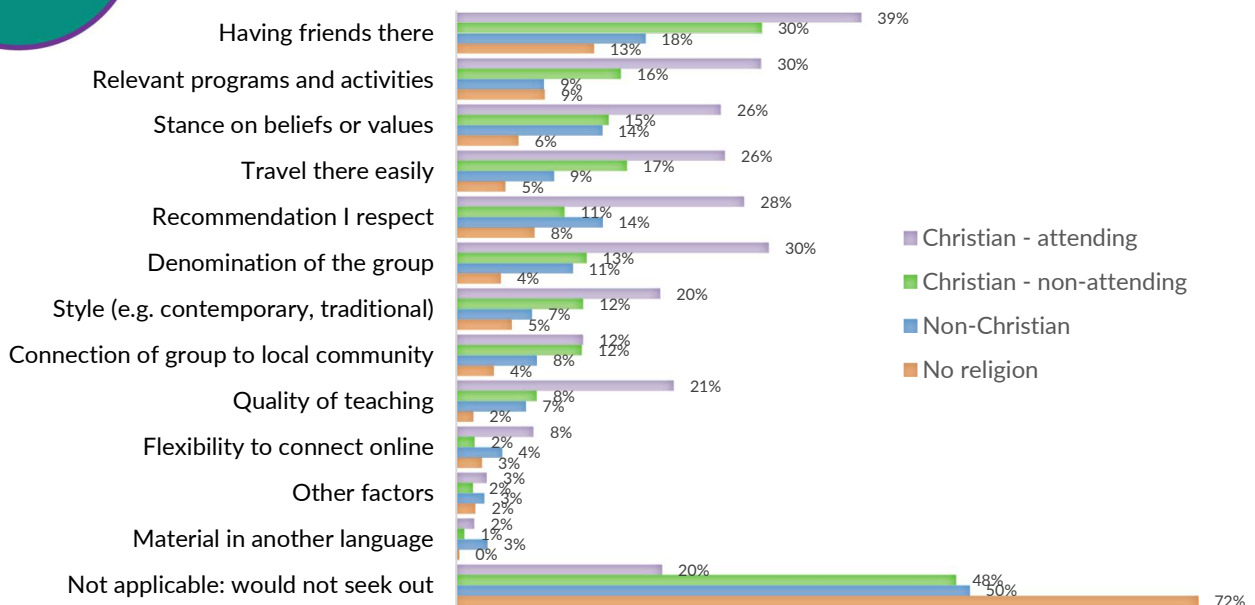
### Influences on seeking connection with a religious congregation, by education level



Source: 2020 ACS (n = 1,306). Respondents could choose up to 4 options.

## Religion

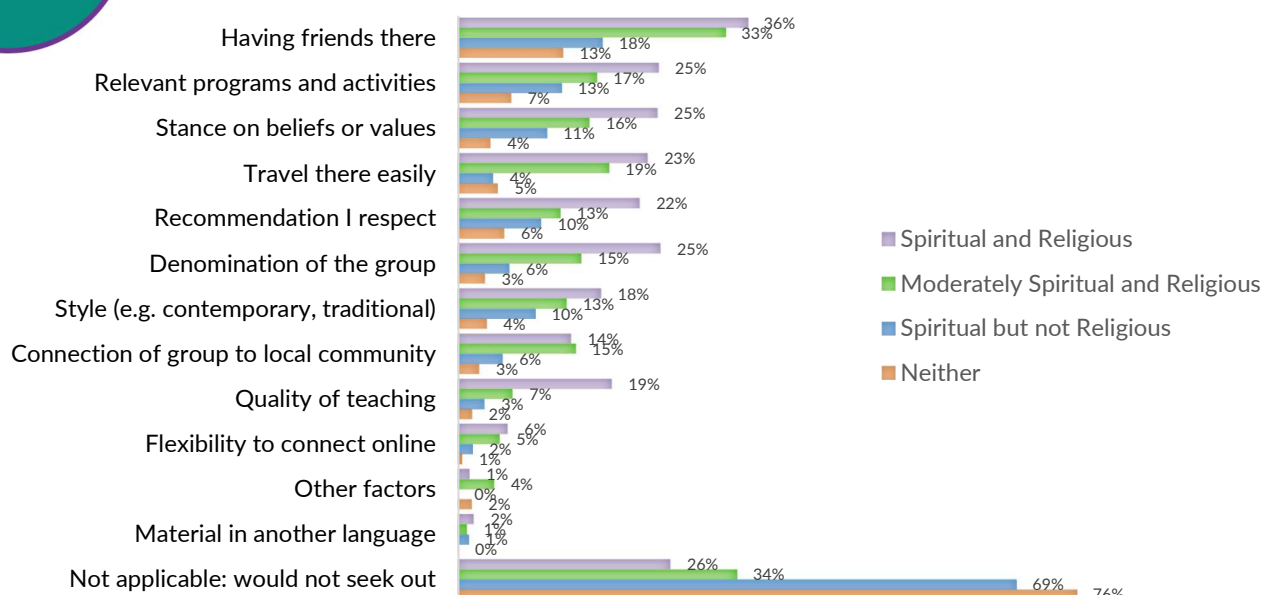
### Influences on seeking connection with a religious congregation, by religious practice



Source: 2020 ACS (n = 1,306). Respondents could choose up to 4 options.

Spirituality  
Cluster

Influences on seeking connection with a religious congregation, by spirituality cluster



Source: 2020 ACS (n = 1,306). Respondents could choose up to 4 options.

Notes: About the Spirituality Clusters

Four groups of Australians:

1. Religious and spiritual: This group see themselves as religious and spiritual to a strong degree.
2. Moderately religious and spiritual: This group see themselves as religious and spiritual to a moderate degree.
3. Spiritual but not religious: This group see themselves as spiritual but not religious.
4. Neither religious nor spiritual: This group does not see themselves as either religious or spiritual.

Our research identified four groups of Australians, indicative of four general approaches to religion and spirituality, using a cluster analysis on answers to the following questions: "To what extent do you see yourself as a religious person?" and "To what extent do you see yourself as a spiritual person?" (11-point response scales, from 0 "not at all" to 10 "very").

About the ACS

NCLS Research aims to provide a picture of social attitudes, religion, spirituality and wellbeing in Australian communities. Australian Community Surveys have been conducted by NCLS Research and partners in 1998, 2002, 2009, 2016, 2018 and 2019. The goals for the Australian Community Surveys are:

1. To compare the attitudes of church attenders and the wider community on a range of social issues.
2. To track religiosity trends over time, including religious beliefs, practices and experience.
3. To evaluate how the Australian community views the role of churches in society.

[ncls.org.au/acs](http://ncls.org.au/acs)