

# Spiritual and religious perceptions amongst Francophones in Québec

A poll conducted by Léger Marketing for the United Church of Canada  
October 2019



# Why did we do this?

## Understanding the context

- We study context in many ways in our church
  - Biblical exegesis
  - Our decision to respond to social justice issues
  - Discerning a divine call

## We think the church as a structure is dying

- Secularism (particularly in Québec)
- Faith and church attendance are no longer societal expectations (post-Christendom)
- Wondering if there is room for the United Church in this context

## Proving us right or wrong in our impressions

- Living in our bubbles
- Hearing what people are saying rather than what the media reports



# Why poll Francophones?

## Our goal:

- To better understand the spiritual and religious needs of Francophones in a post Quiet-Revolution society
- To discern how (and if) we can respond to these needs
- To better communicate the unique qualities of the United Church of Canada

## NOT our goal:

- Fill church pews
- Defend our pre-existing convictions
- Finding the magic potion



# Who responded to the poll?

We excluded from our study folks who were:

- Of a non-Christian faith (Muslim, Jewish, Hindu) or described themselves as atheist
- Anglophones
- Children under 18

We included:

- People who said they were Christian, even if they were not church-goers or 'practicing'
- Spiritual, but not religious
- Non-Christian, but not atheist
- Living in all regions of Québec



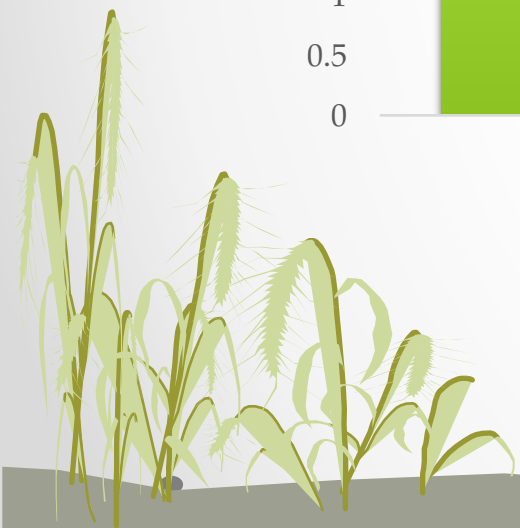
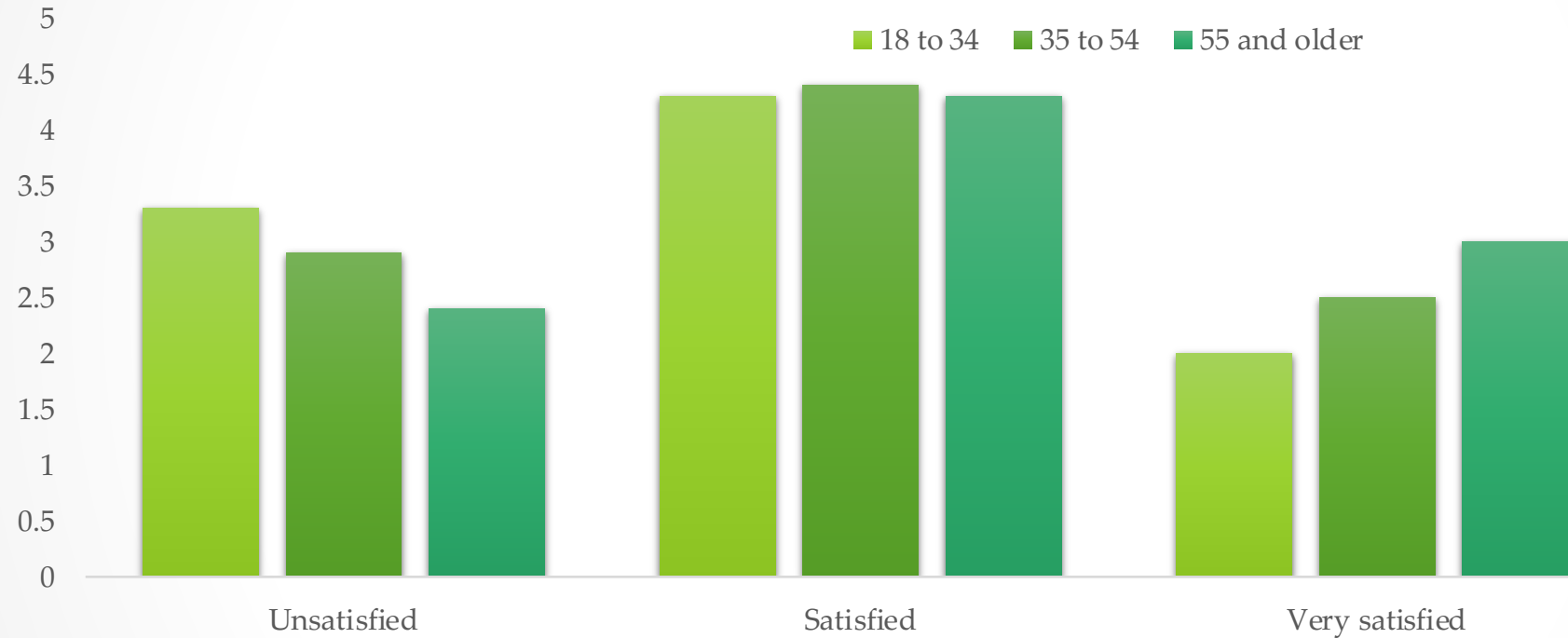
# Who are they?

The respondents :

- 91% said they were Roman Catholic
- 5% said they were spiritual, but not religious
- 3% said they were Protestant
- 65% said they were people of faith
- 18% said they were regular church-goers or 'practicing' their faith
- 56% had never heard of the United Church of Canada, 25% hadn't heard enough to have an opinion – leaving a split of positive and negative impressions amongst the remaining 19%



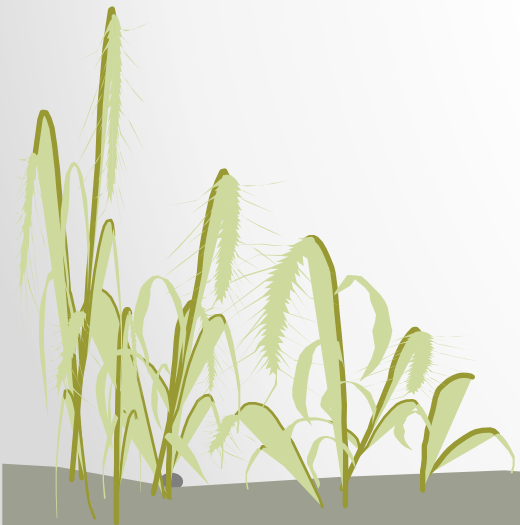
# Level of satisfaction in regards to spiritual life



# Spirit of openness

42% of respondents from 18 to 54 years old say that they are « interested in a contemporary Christian church that offers new perspectives »  
(only 34% of those 55 and older)

- Openness on contraception (88%)
- Allows clergy to be married (87%)
- Allows women to be clergy (84%)
- Openness to remarriage (84%)
- Openness on the issue of abortion (80%)
- Openness on same-gender marriage (78%)
- Tolerant of different beliefs within its congregation (77%)



# The echoes of the Quiet Revolution

Even though we often think of people 55 and older as more conservative, they demand more modernity from their church than the younger generation.

(Remember that 18% of participants said they were 'practicing', 91% say they are Roman Catholic)

- Impacts on family life during the Quiet Revolution are most obvious in older generation.
- Younger generations don't carry that baggage.
- Particularly big differences on issues of contraception, female clergy, celibacy of priests, confession without priest as intermediary; less sizable differences on same-gender marriage, faith exploration in small groups, openness to diversity in beliefs.



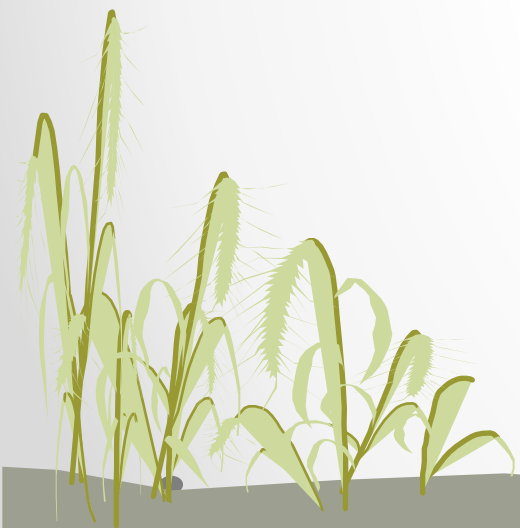


# Reasons for not going to church

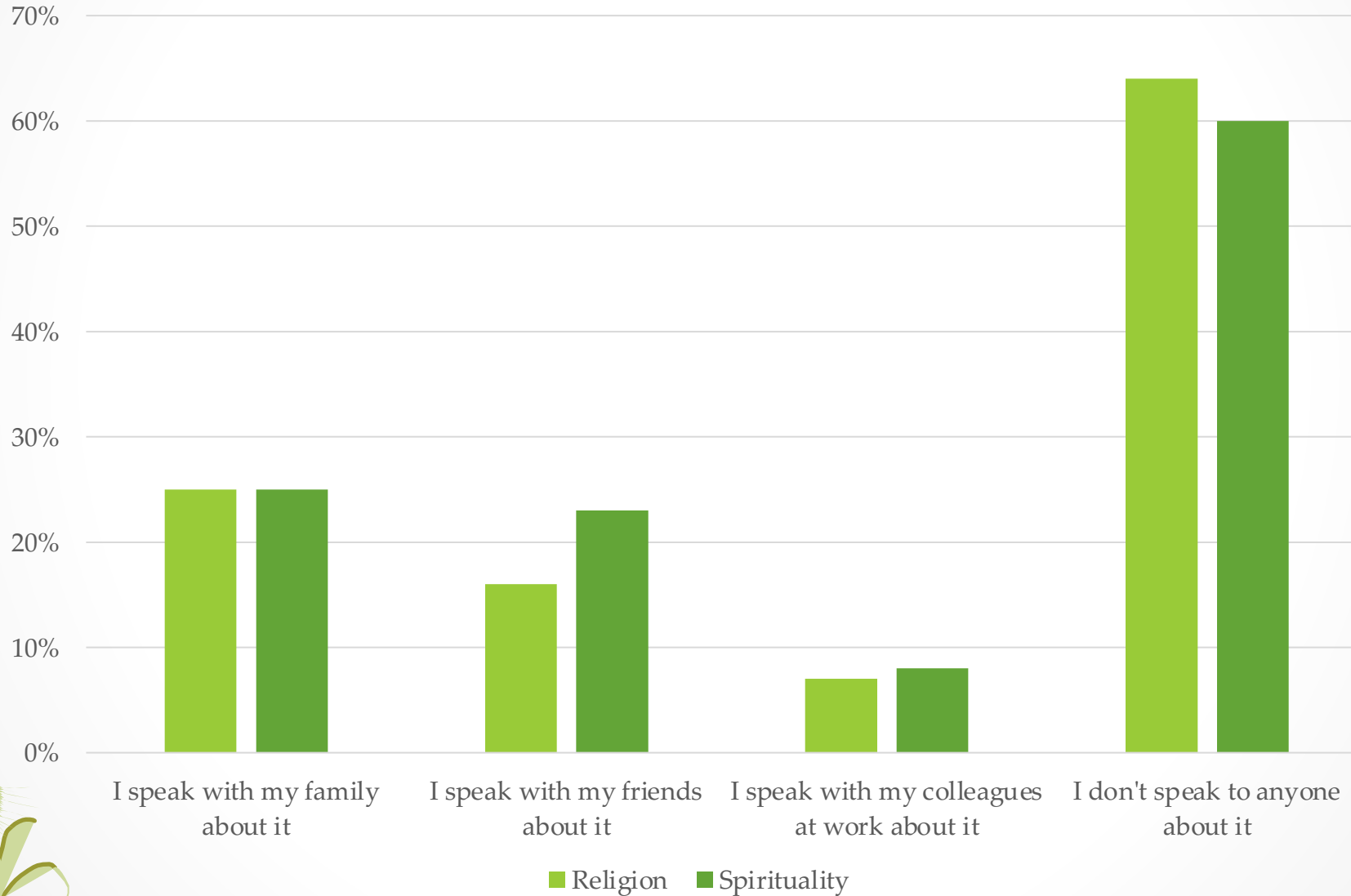
What are the reasons for your lack of more frequently going to church?

(six highest responses)

- Time doesn't suit me (26%, 35% amongst the 18 to 34 year olds)
- The church needs to change on many fronts (18%, 31% amongst women)
- Child abuse by priests (16%)
- Being forced to believe certain things (no room to explore/no room for flexibility) (16%)
- It doesn't relate to my daily life (12%)
- I don't like some of the positions taken by the church (11%)

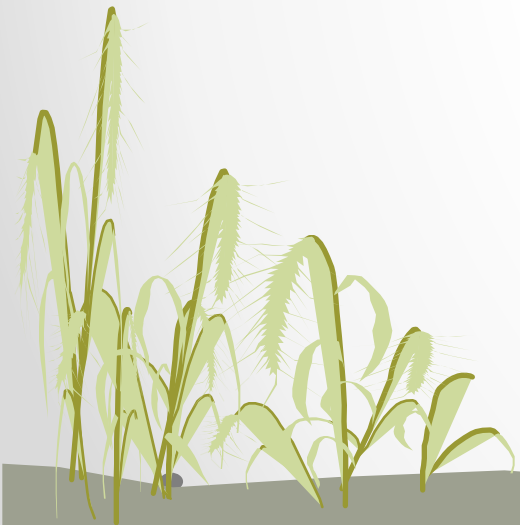


# Talking about religion and spirituality



# Let's not talk about it

- 64% of participants don't talk about religion with anyone, 60% don't talk about spirituality niether.
  - Amongst the 36% who talk about it, young people are the highest proportion, and this is mostly with family and close friends.
  - Differences between religion and spiritualité are minimal, except when speaking with friends where spirituality is more acceptable a topic of discussion.



# Most important thing a contemporary church could do

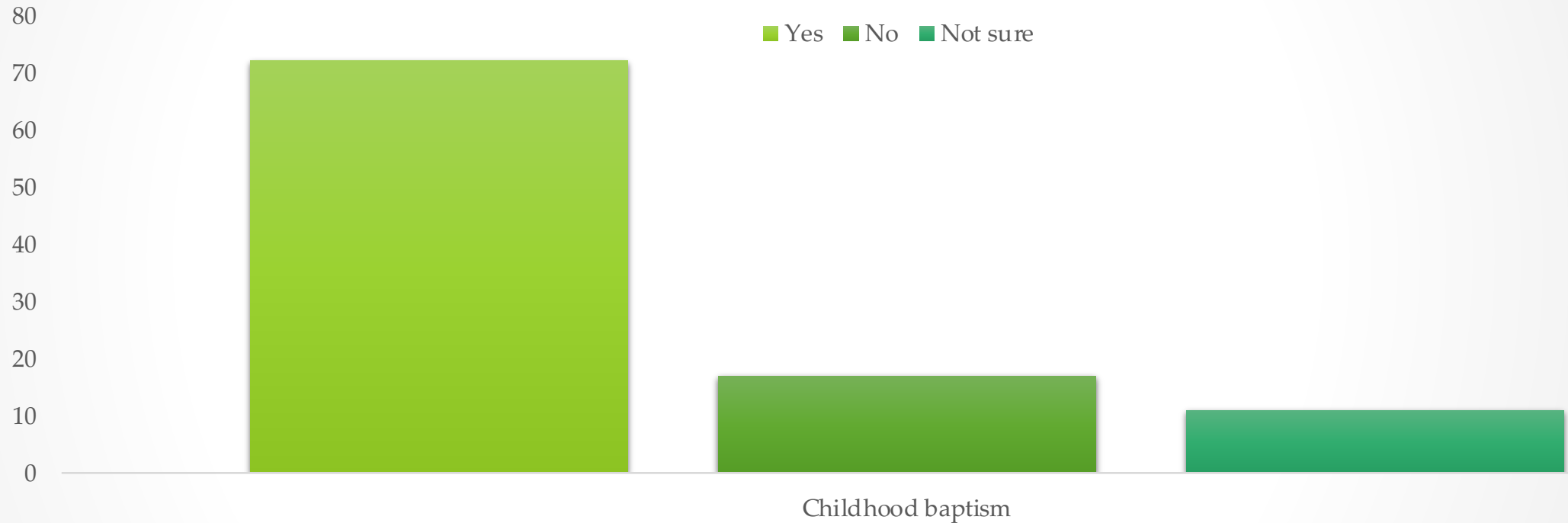
When asked what the most important things a contemporary church could do, the following six responses top the charts:

(This represents the 30% of respondents who had something to say. All other responses were 2% or less, 55% had no answer)

- More openness/inclusion/welcoming of all people (less judgement)
- To modernize/become more 'with the times'/openness to today's realities
- Allow priests to marry/abolish celibacy as a requirement of the priesthood
- Let women become priests
- Give more freedom/respect differences/ be less controlling
- Be a unifying force/gathering place

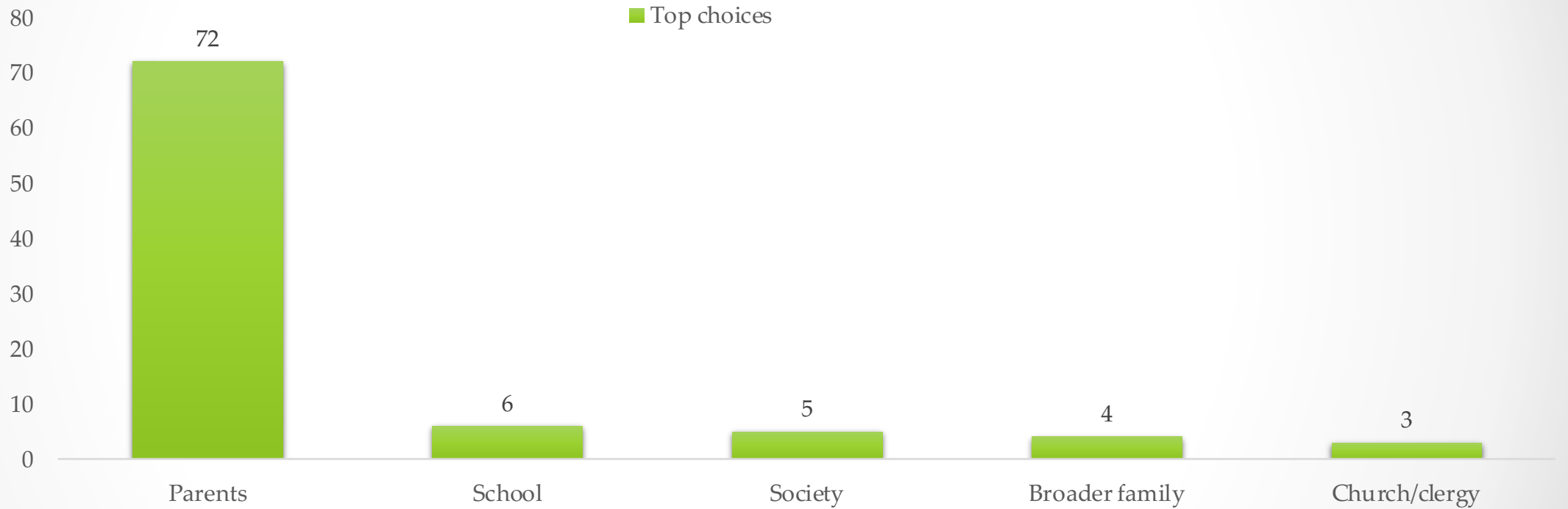


# If you have children, will they be (have they been) baptised?



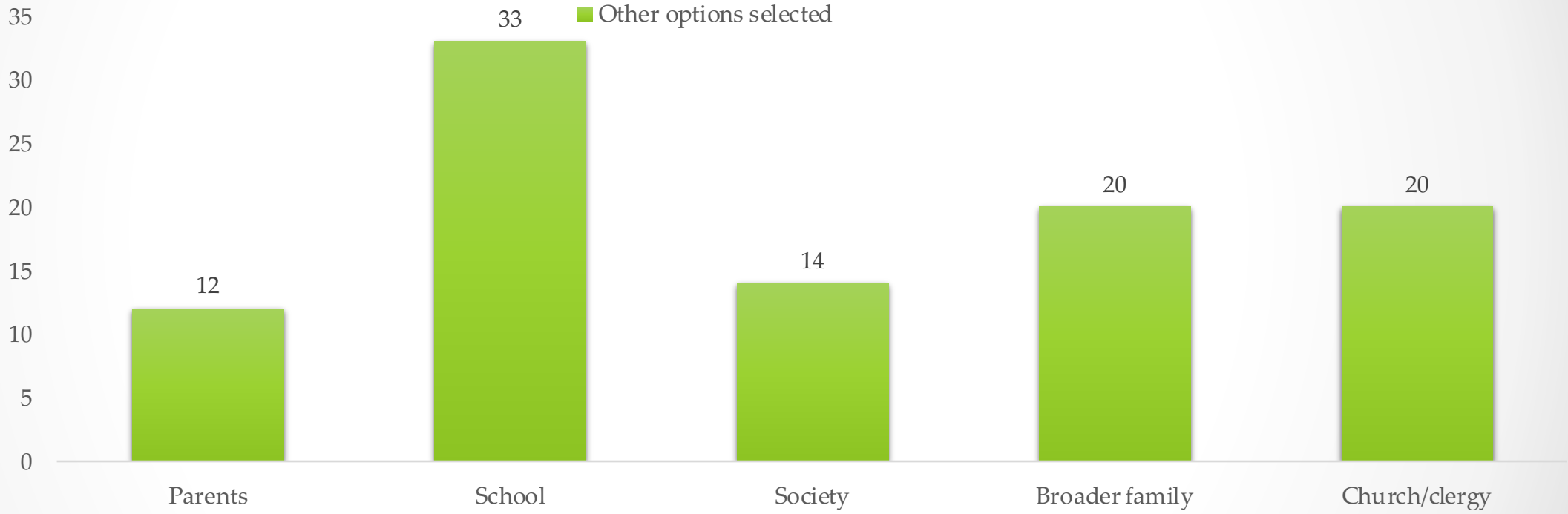
*Reminder: only 18% of participants say that they are 'practicing'*

# In your opinion, who should have the primary role in religious and spiritual education of children?

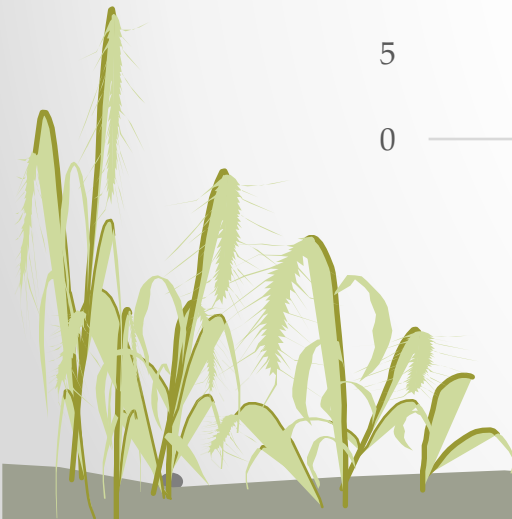


*Don't know = 5%*  
*None = 3%*

# In your opinion, who else should be involved in the religious and spiritual education of children



*Don't know = 5pc*  
*None = 7pc*



# Spiritual and religious gathering places

- The most popular choices (in order of popularity):

- Café/restaurant
- Outdoors (in a park or nature setting)
- Concert
- In someone's home
- Community Centre
- Church/sanctuary
- Conference with guest speakers
- Workplace, school, online (all at 1% support)

Younger people are more interested by cafés/restaurants, conferences and discussion groups. 35 to 54 year olds are more interested in nature settings and outdoors.





# So what have we learned?

- Fear of church as a controlling institution is still present
- The 18 to 34 year olds are the most open demographic
- UCC is unknown, but responds to most, if not all hesitations from Francophones who are unsatisfied with their spiritual lives and open to a contemporary expression of church
- Sunday mornings in church buildings is not ideal for this ministry
- Roman Catholics (practicing and non-practicing) want to see change even within their own church.





# **Informal Small Group Research 2022**

**Knowing our audience in-  
depth**

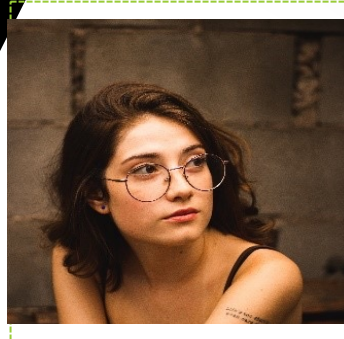


# Ta spiritualité, ton *credo*

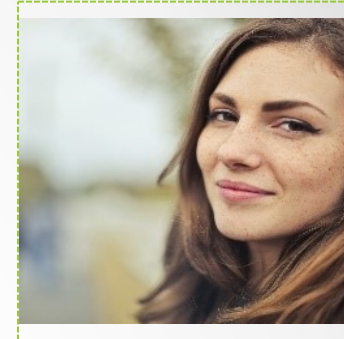
Mon Credo est une plateforme accueillante et inclusive qui te permet d'explorer une foule de sujets en matière de foi et de spiritualité chrétiennes. Ici, on explore, on découvre, on discute, on échange et on fait des rencontres surprenantes...dans la bienveillance et l'ouverture d'esprit.



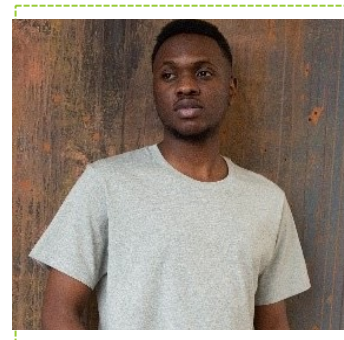
# Five personas



Marie



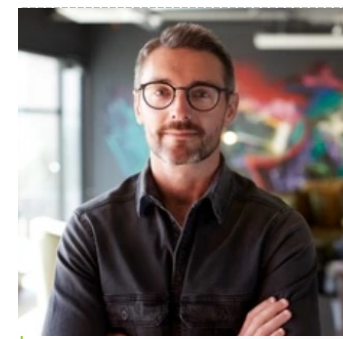
Josée



Osée



Marie-Jude



Nicolas



**JOSÉE, 32 ans**

**Origine :** Montréal

**Profession :**

**Éducation :**

**Statut social :**

**Personnes et sources d'influence :** son entourage

### À la rencontre de Josée

#### Comment Josée entendra-t-elle parler de l'ÉUC?

Josée a été baptisée dans l'Église catholique, est ouverte à développer de nouvelles relations d'un groupe qui favorise les activités familiales entendra parler de l'ÉUC par l'entremise de ses réseaux sociaux si des activités paroissiales

#### Une journée typique

**MARIE, 35 ans**

**Origine :** France

**Profession :** travail de bureau

**Éducation :** études supérieures

**Statut social :** célibataire, gaie

**Personnes et sources d'influence :** les jeunes mères de son âge, ses amies, ses collègues

### À la rencontre de Marie

Marie est arrivée au Canada depuis longtemps ici et a trouvé une communauté catholique et a fait connaissance, toutefois pas en D... croit plutôt en la s...

#### Comment Marie entendra-t-elle parler de l'ÉUC?

En tant que nouvelle arrivante au pays, Marie trouve difficile de se faire des amis, de se créer un réseau. En se baladant à Montréal, elle constate la présence de nombreuses églises et leurs implications sociales. Elle se dit que le fait de rejoindre une communauté religieuse pourrait être un moyen de se bâtir un réseau en faisant œuvre utile.

#### ... et une fois la relation établie

Si Marie décide d'intégrer une communauté qu'elle ressent une ouverture transparente. Elle cherche à...

#### Une journée typique

- ✓ 9 h à 17 h au travail
- ✓ Comprendre les us et coutumes occupe beaucoup de son temps
- ✓ Découverte et balade en ville

#### Attentes envers une église

- ✓ Esprit d'entraide
- ✓ Acceptation, ouverture d'esprit, authenticité
- ✓ Implication dans la communauté, œuvres de bienfaisance

#### Objectifs personnels

- ✓ Avoir des enfants seule ou avec quelqu'un
- ✓ Projet d'entrepreneuriat

#### Incitatifs à l'engagement dans une communauté religieuse

- ✓ La parole est donnée aux autres, orientée vers la discussion plutôt que vers le sermon classique

**Osée, 33 ans**

**Origine :** Cameroun

**Profession :** en recherche d'emploi

**Éducation :** présentement aux études

**Statut social :** marié

**Personnes et sources d'influence :** sa famille d'accueil, ses frères camerounais au Canada, les pasteurs qu'il a côtoyés chez lui

### À la rencontre d'Osée

Osée est originaire de Cameroun, a décidé d'habiter en France pour ses études dans le but de découvrir la culture protestante avec une communauté religieuse, l'école du dimanche.

Pour lui, la foi n'est pas un grand étonnement, il a discuté dans tous les pays.

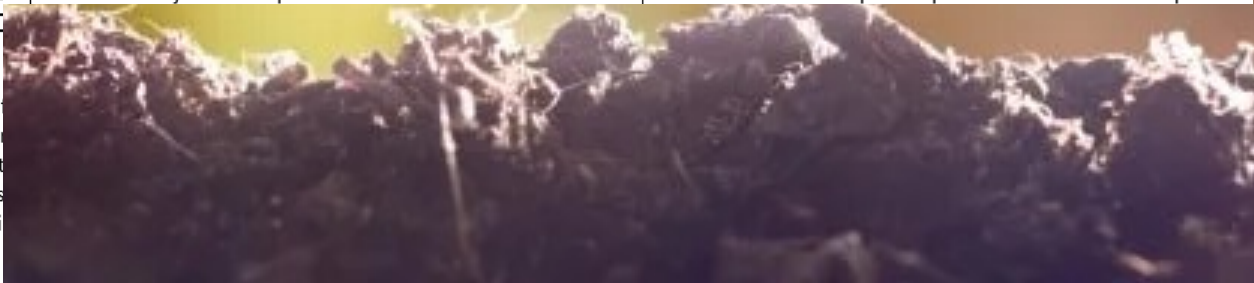


#### Comment Osée entendra-t-il parler de l'ÉUC?

Osée a perdu ses repères depuis son arrivée au Canada. Il a une vision claire de la foi qui appartient à sa culture et la réalité canadienne est différente. Ici, les gens ne parlent pas de Dieu ouvertement et la religion est souvent perçue comme un instrument de manipulation. La communauté religieuse qu'il joindra lui aura été probablement présentée par sa famille d'accueil ou un pasteur de sa région natale. Ses recherches en ligne ont été plutôt infructueuses sur ce plan.

#### ... et une fois la relation établie

Pour Osée, il y a des différences culturelles plus vivantes, plus cérémonielles et on est un peu plus au sein des communautés et souvent plus âgés que lui. Il est ouvert à ces cultures et de générations au sein de la communauté.



A young green plant with four leaves growing out of dark soil against a bright, blurred background. The plant is positioned on the left side of the frame, with its stem and leaves clearly visible. The leaves are vibrant green and have a slightly glossy texture. The soil is dark and appears rich and moist. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of green and yellow, suggesting a natural outdoor setting with sunlight filtering through. The overall mood is one of growth and hope.

**What we learned  
from each**