

# Study: The religiosity of Canadians and the COVID-19 pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on many aspects of Canadian life, including religion. In particular, the risks associated with the virus, as well as physical distancing measures, have limited access to places of worship. Many religious organizations have offered the option to attend religious services online. Although the pandemic has made group worship difficult, some surveys conducted by private firms have suggested that it has led to an increase in prayer or a strengthening of faith.

Using data from several cycles of the General Social Survey, a new study released today examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the religiosity of Canadians. Specifically, it analyzes changes in rates of religious affiliation, frequency of participation in religious activities on a group or individual basis, and involvement with religious organizations from 2015 to 2020.

The study found a decrease in group religious participation from 2019 (pre-pandemic) to 2020 (start of the pandemic). In the general population, the percentage of people who participated in a religious group activity in the previous year fell from 47% in 2019 to 40% in 2020.

The study also found that the impact of the pandemic on participation in religious group activities was greater for some religious groups. For example, the proportion of people who had participated in a religious group activity in the previous year fell more sharply than average among Buddhists (from 74% in 2019 to 50% in 2020) and Muslims (from 71% to 57%). This proportion fell from 60% to 53% among Christian-affiliated groups, from 75% to 67% among Jewish people, and from 78% to 70% among Hindus.

Finally, the data revealed that, overall, the pandemic had no measurable effect on the frequency of individual religious or spiritual activities (e.g., prayer, meditation, etc.). Similarly, it did not appear to have affected self-reported religious affiliation.

On October 26, new data from the 2021 Census will provide a more detailed picture of the diversity of religious affiliation groups in Canada and of the people that form them.

## Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5024](#).

The study entitled "[The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the religiosity of Canadians](#)" is now available in the series *StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada* ([45280001](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).

