

the Confirmation



PROJECT

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www.theconfirmationproject.com

Confirmation Work in Ecumenical and International Perspectives:

Research Results and Practical Innovations

3-5 May, 2017

Erfurt, Germany

The UMC in the U.S.

Professing Members	7.1 million
Congregations	32,000
Average weekly attendance	2.7 million

<http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/united-methodists-at-a-glance>

based on data from 2015

The Confirmation Project Sample

UMC Congregations that took part in the study (fall 2015-spring 2016)	700
Conferences that took part in the study (adult and youth)	56
Confirmands	416 from 40 conferences

The Confirmation Project Sample

Youth (Confirmands) Survey (416 respondents)

- 40 conferences from 35 states
- Strong age distribution: median age is 13
- Racial representation reflects the denomination as a whole, with 16% minority respondents
- 62% female/38% male

The Confirmation Project Sample

Adult Survey

(1,372 workers and main leaders respondents,
285 parent respondents)

Of the workers and main leaders...

- 66% clergy
- 19% professional youth workers
- 12% volunteers (workers)
- 3% other church staff members

MOTIVATION

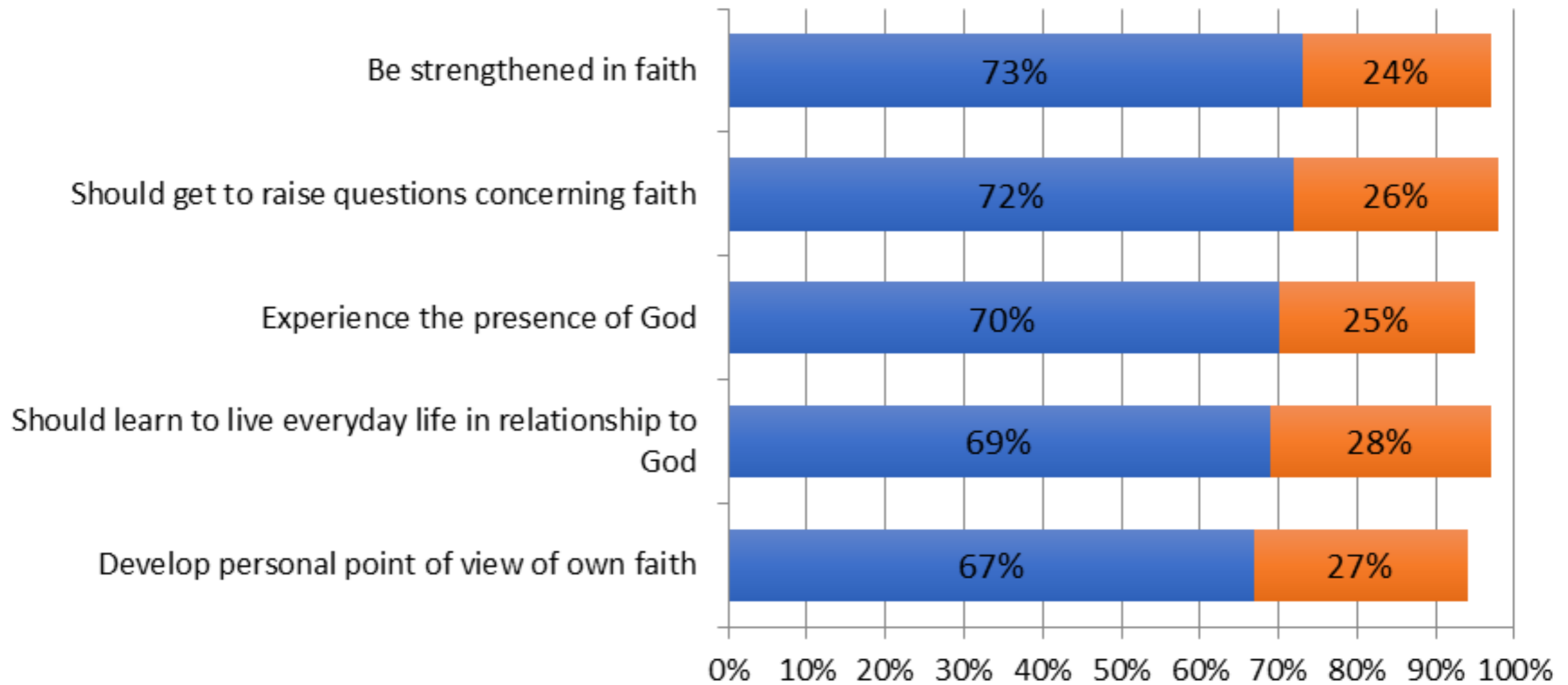
Why did you decide to participate in CEP?	agree
To learn more about God and faith.	89%
To be strengthened in my faith	88%
To come to my own decision about my faith in God.	85%
I wanted to be confirmed.	82%
To make an important step in growing up.	79%

MOTIVATION

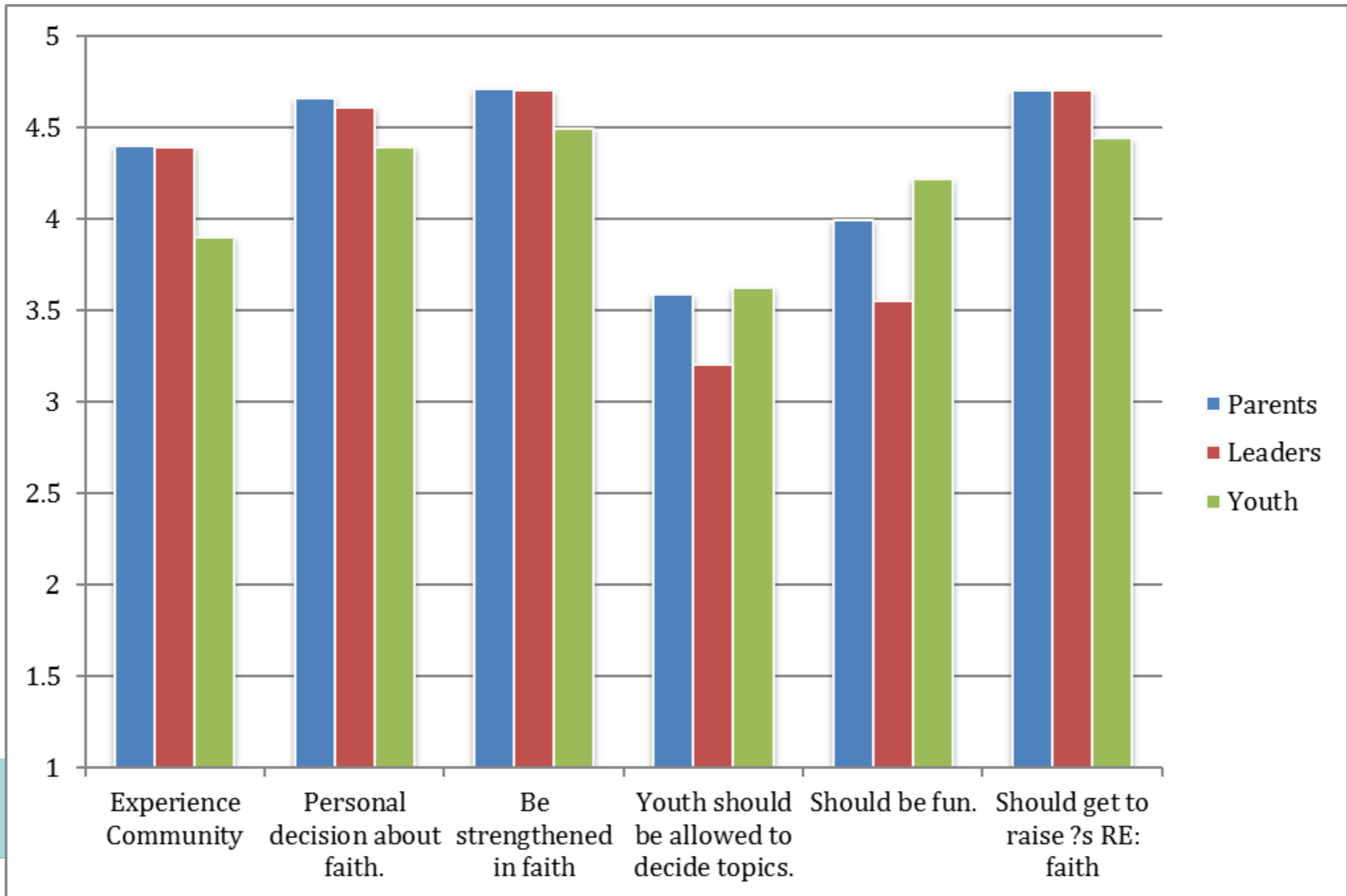
Why did you decide to participate in CEP?	agree
My friends did so as well.	33%
To have a celebration with friends and family at the end.	21%
To get money or presents at the end.	7%

Leader Goals for Confirmation

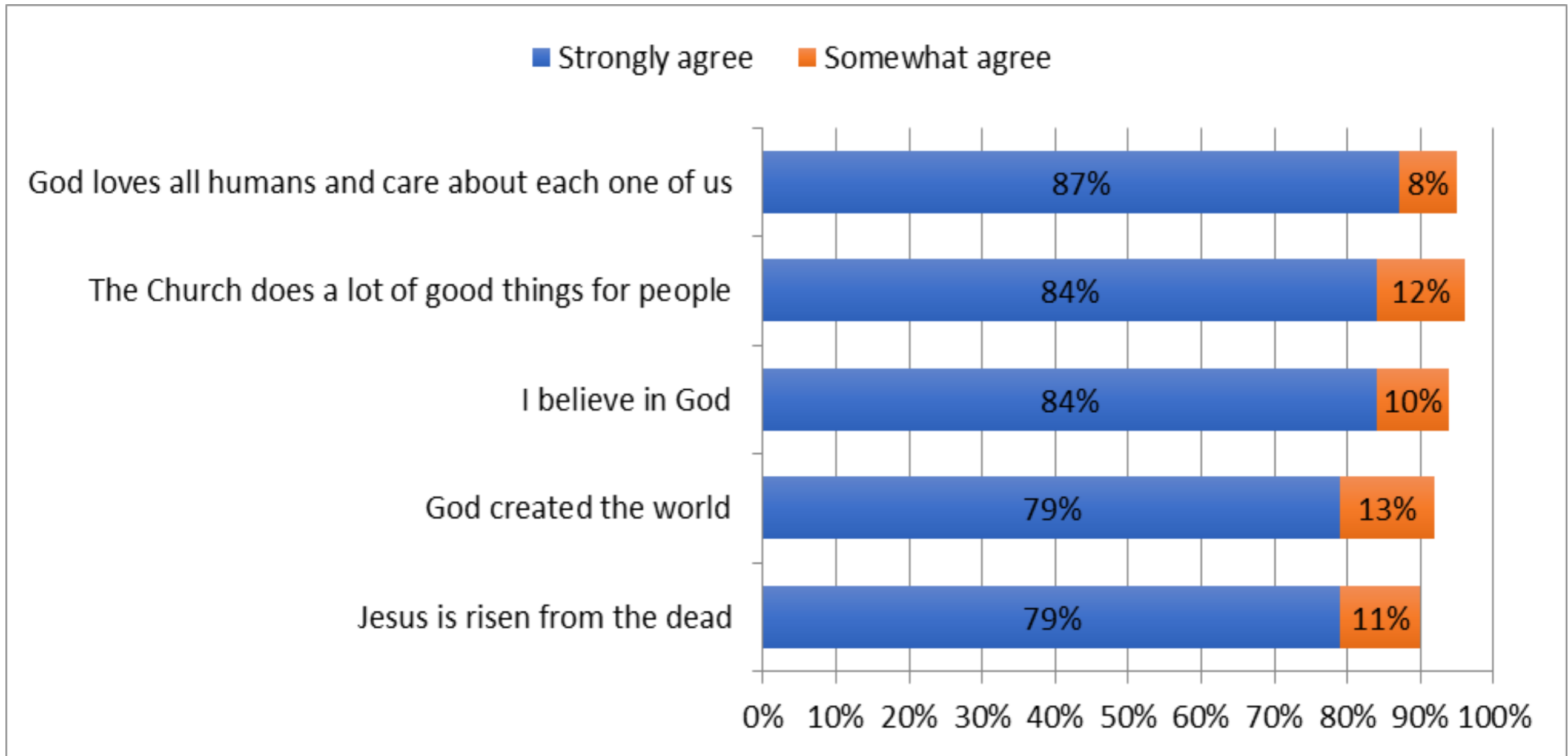
■ Extremely important ■ Very important



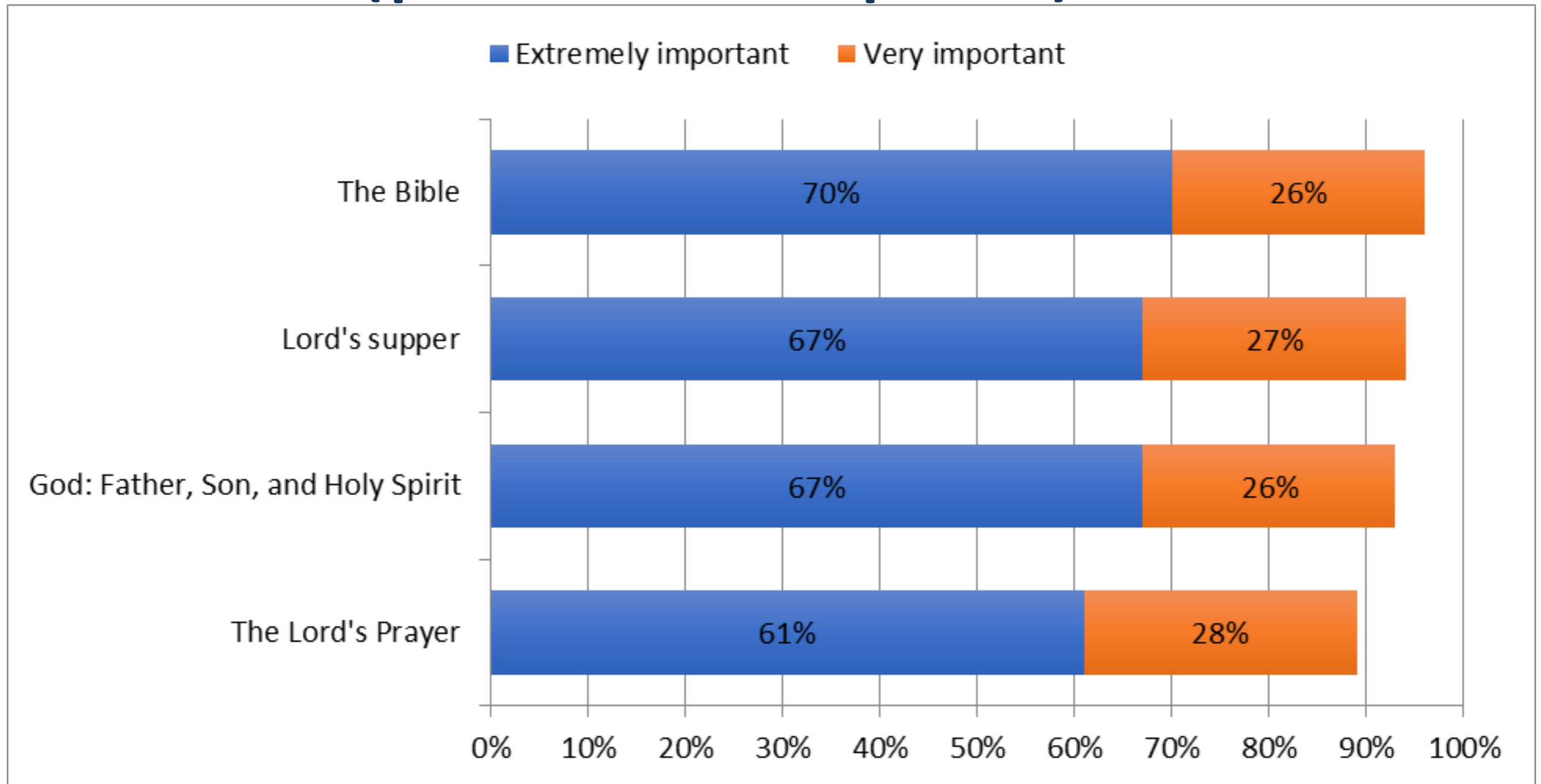
Expectations: goals & motivation



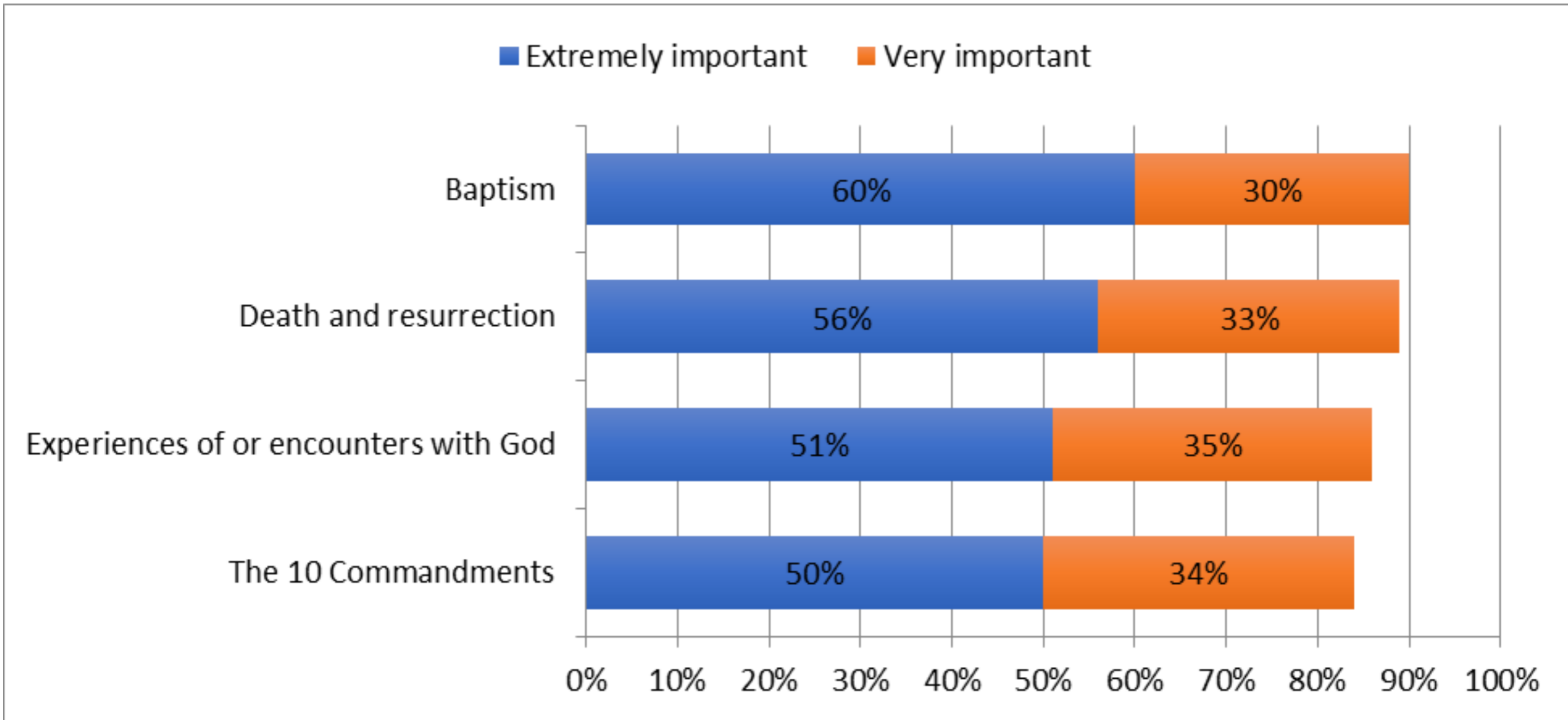
Confirmands' attitudes toward Christian beliefs



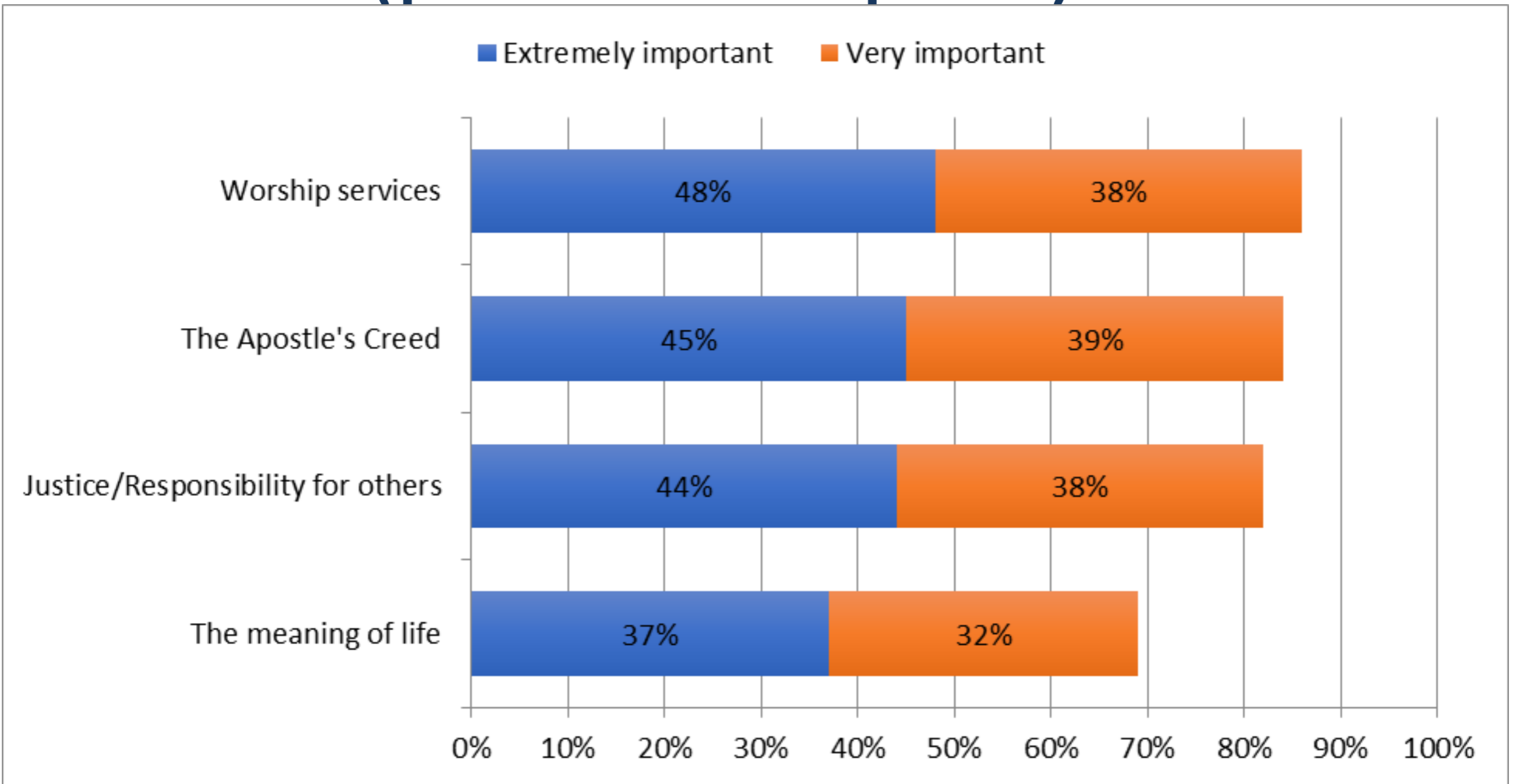
TOPICS (parents' top 12)



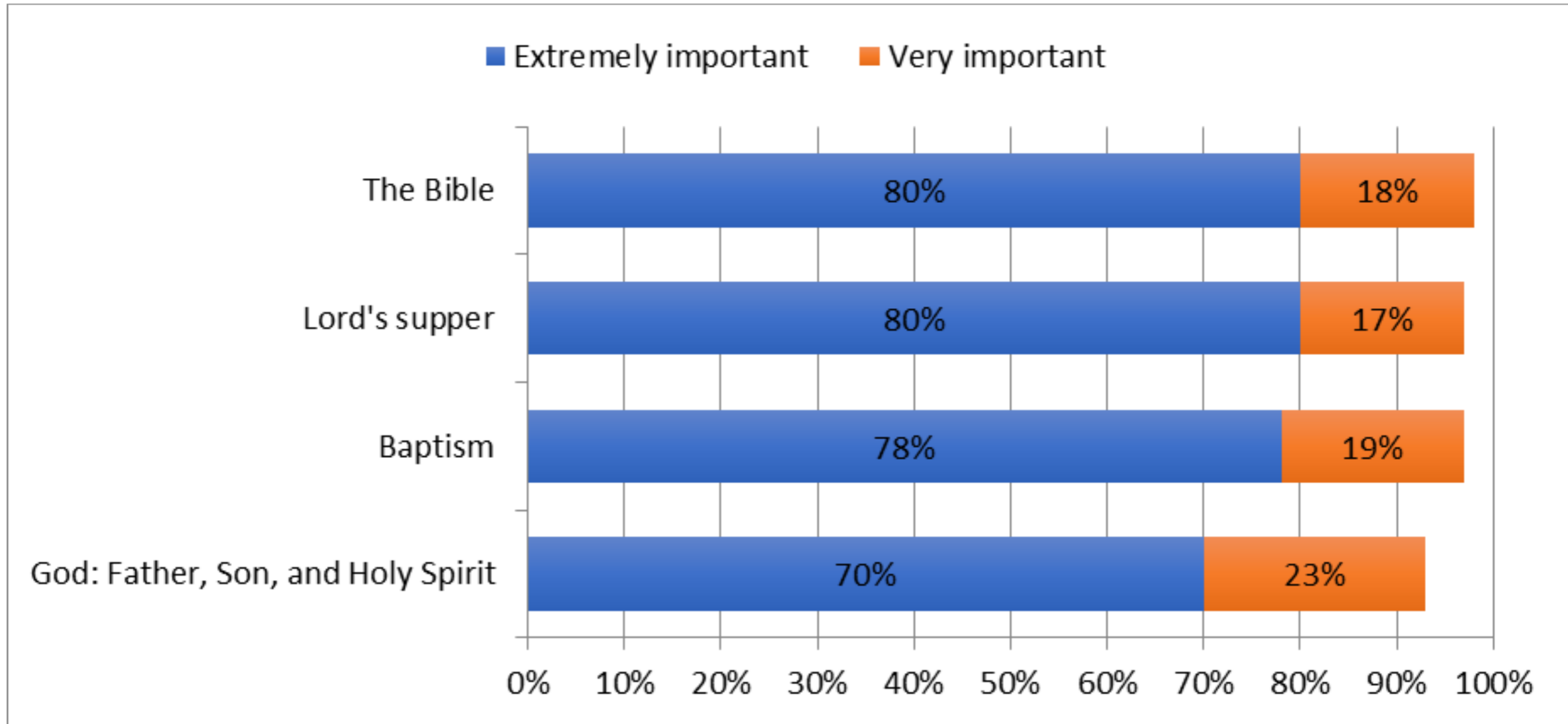
TOPICS (parents' top 12)



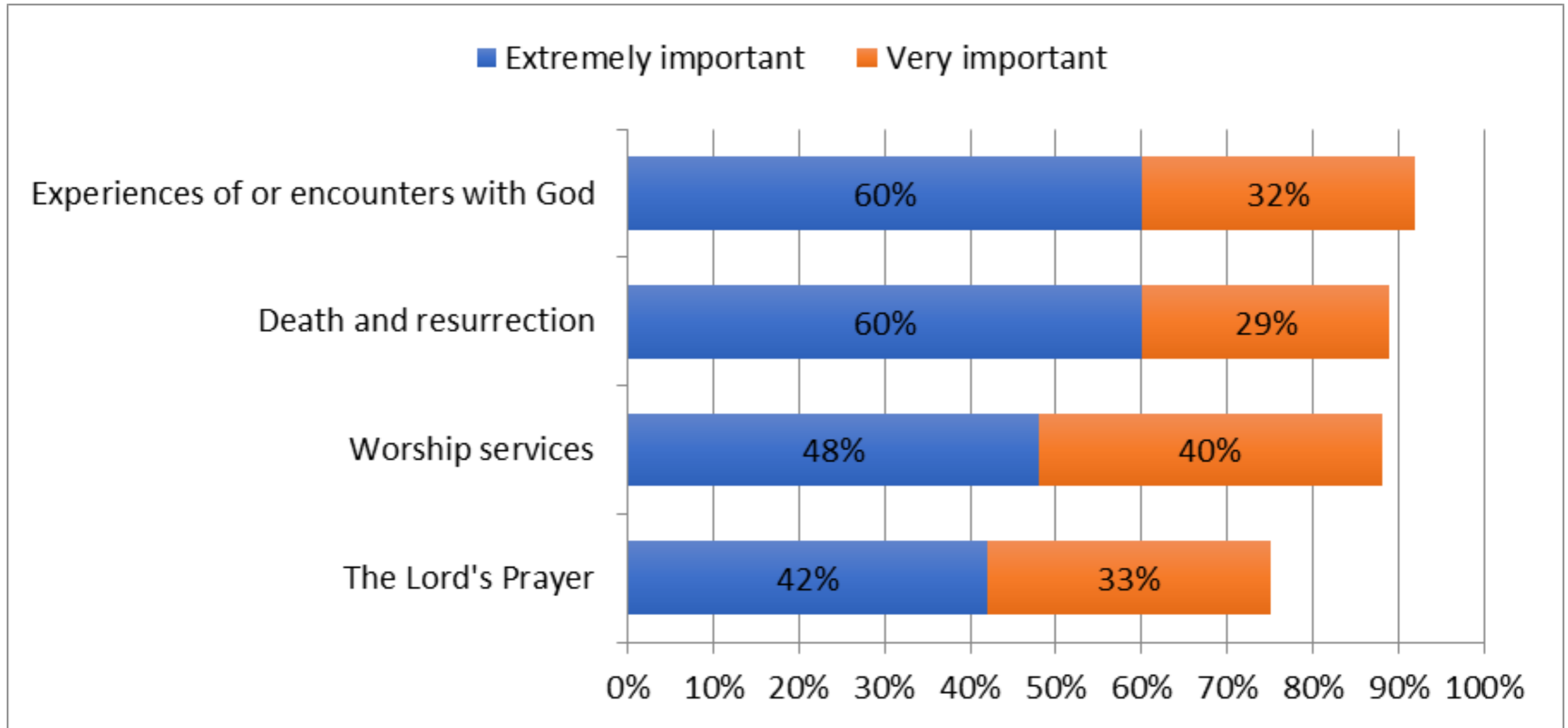
TOPICS (parents' top 12)



TOPICS (leaders)

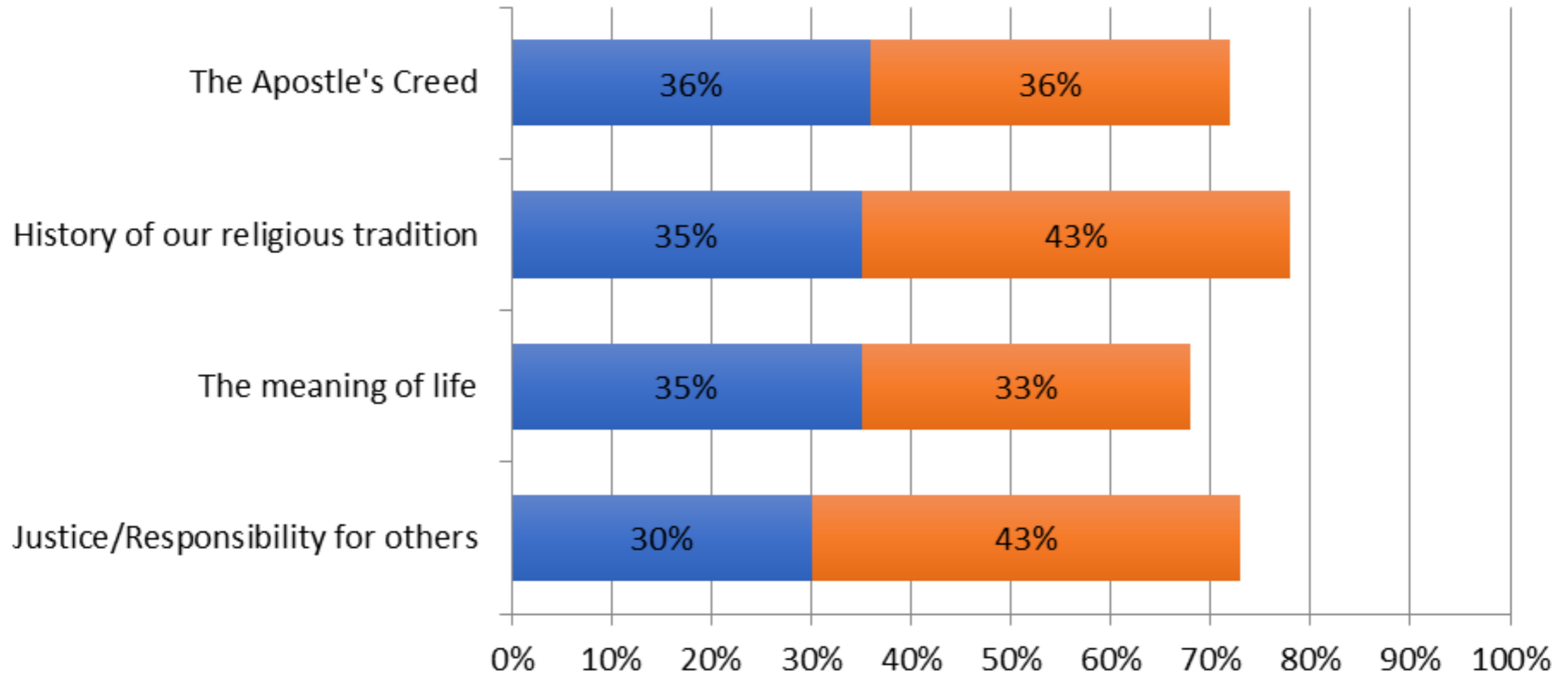


TOPICS (leaders)



TOPICS (leaders)

■ Extremely important ■ Very important



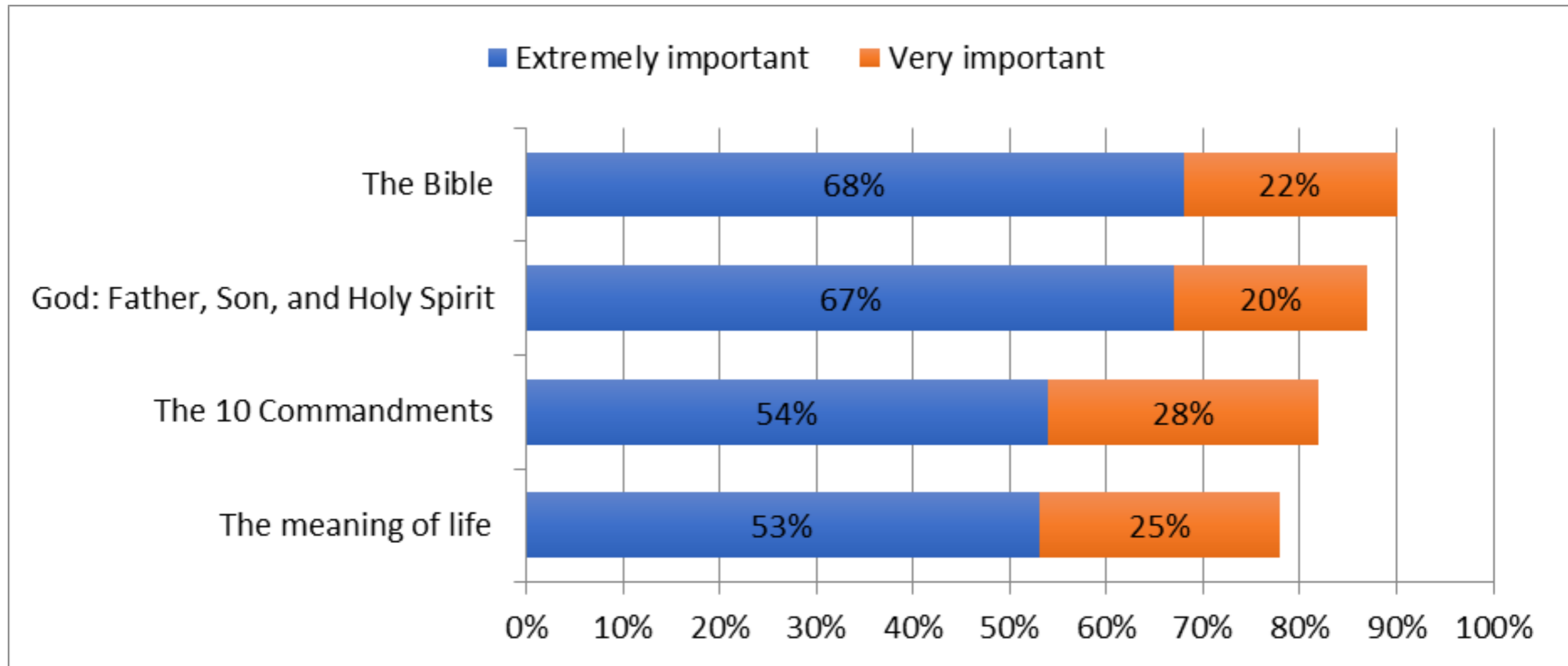
UMC Parents:

- 1) Bible
- 2-3) God, tie with Lord's Supper
- 4-5) Baptism, tie with Lord's Prayer
- 6) Death and Resurrection
- 7-8) Experiences of God, tie with Worship services
- 9) 10 Commandments
- 10) Apostle's Creed
- 11) Justice and Responsibility
- 12) History of our religious tradition

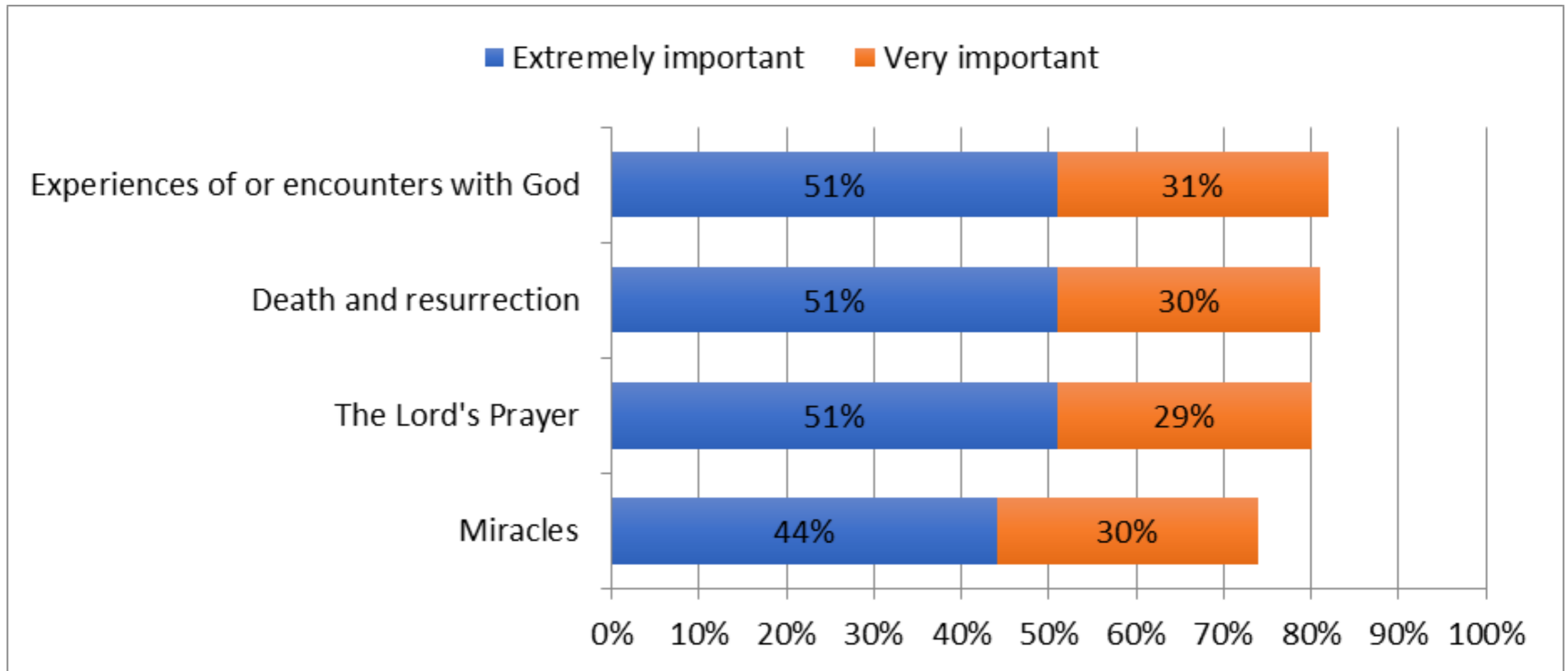
UMC Leaders:

- 1-2) Bible, tie with Lord's Supper
- 3) Baptism
- 4) God
- 5) Experiences of God
- 6) Death and Resurrection
- 7) Worship services
- 8) Lord's Prayer
- 9) Justice and Responsibility
- 10) Apostle's Creed
- 11) Meaning of Life
- 12) 10 Commandments

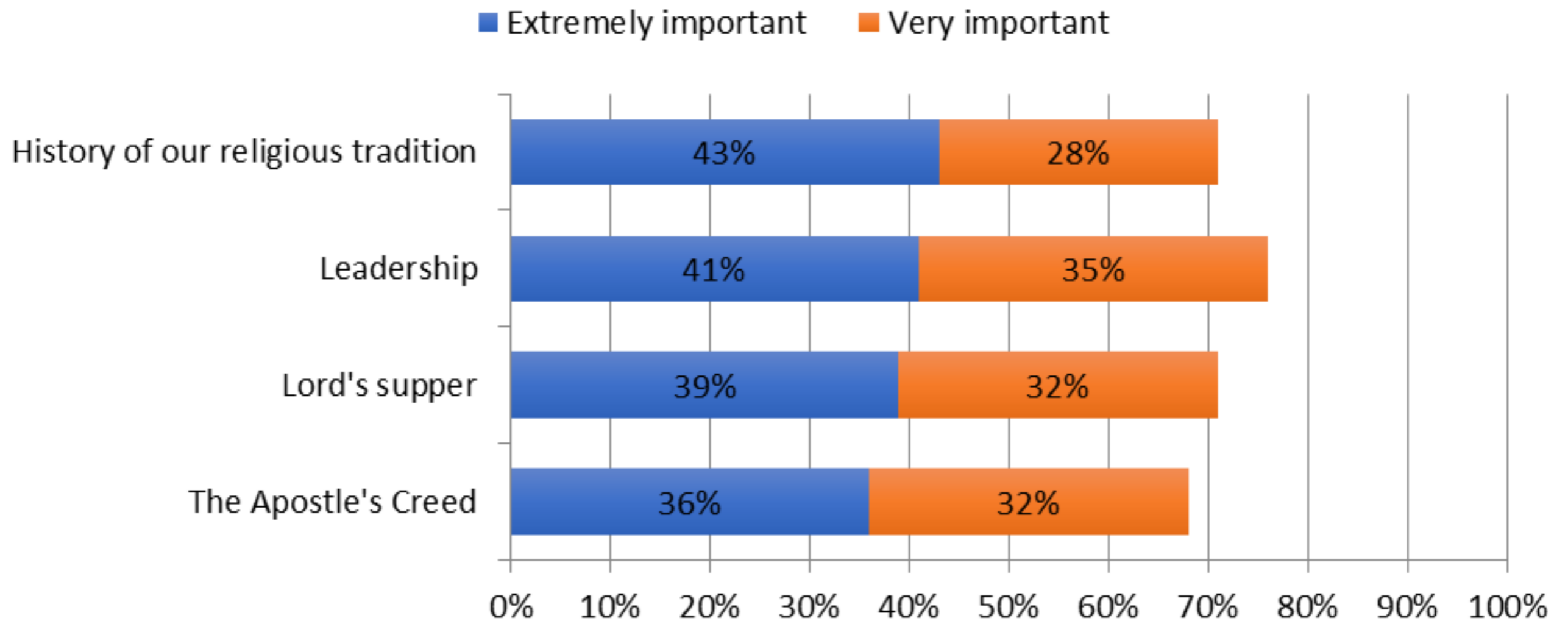
TOPICS (youth)



TOPICS (youth)



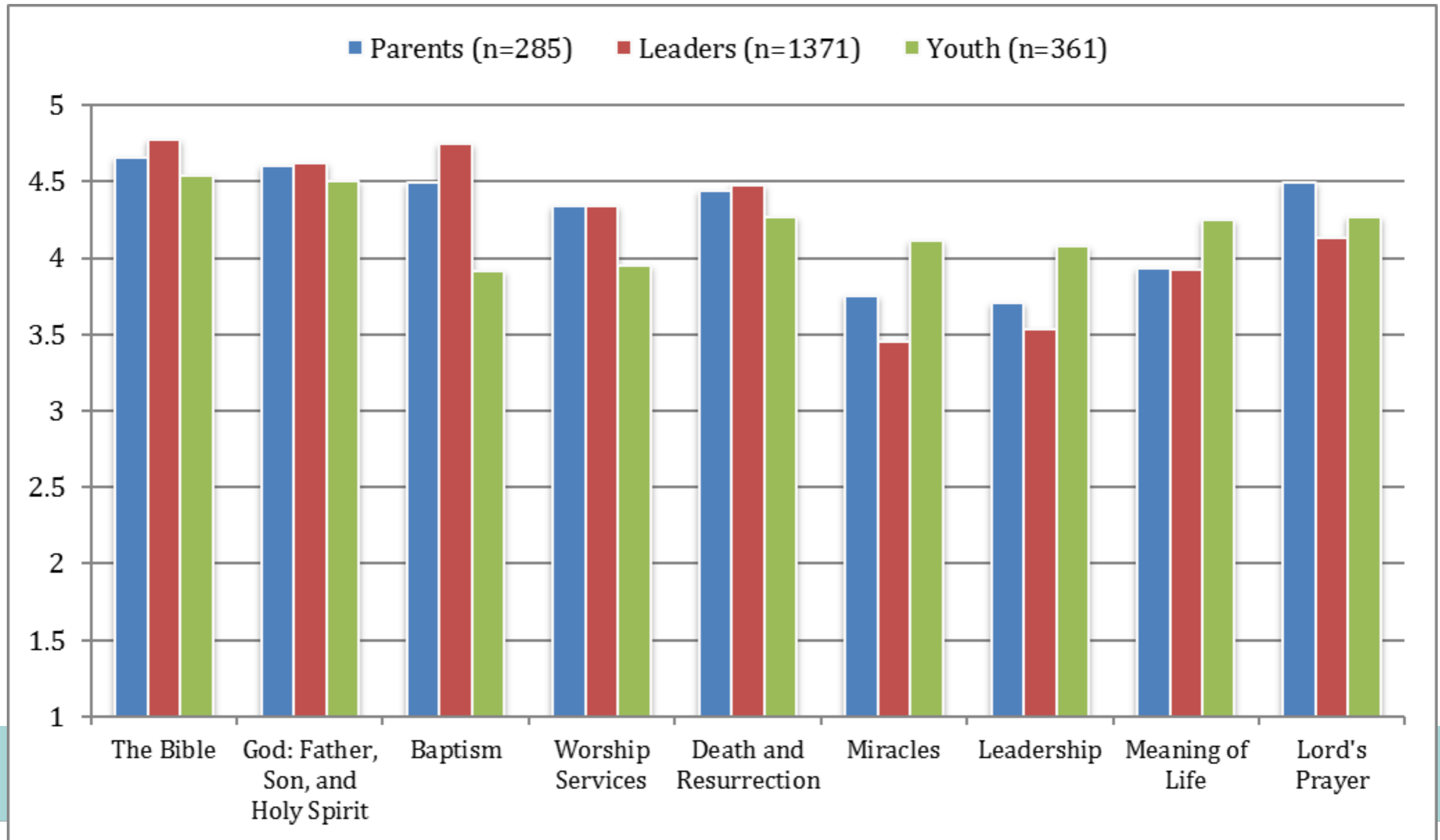
TOPICS (youth)



Top Youth Responses

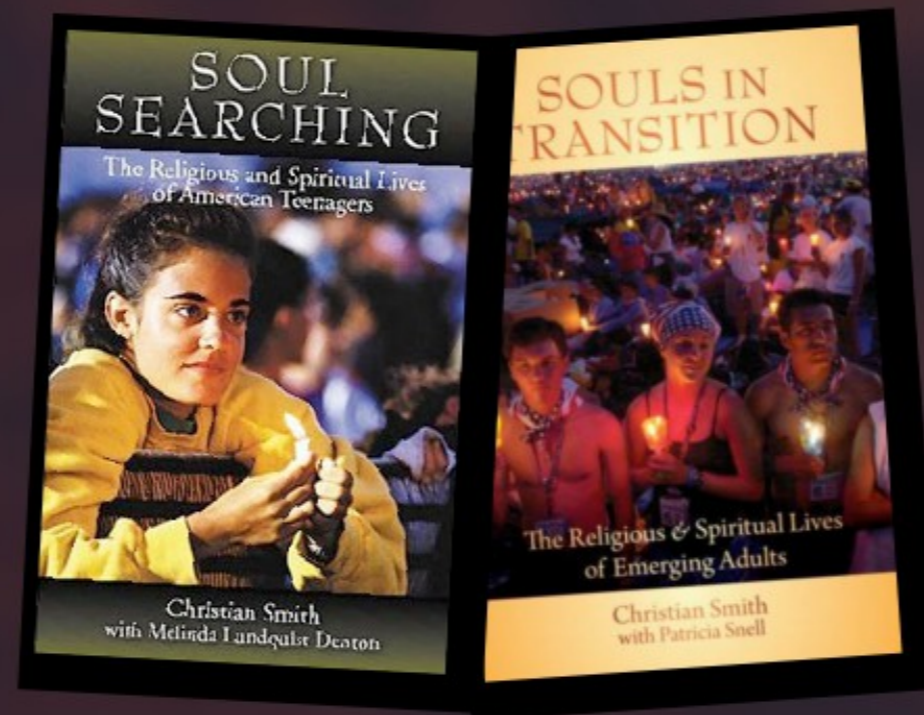
- 1) *The Bible*
- 2) *God (F,S,HS)*
- 3) *10 Commandments*
- 4) **Lord's Prayer*
- 4) **Death and Resurrection*
- 6) *Experiences with God*
- 7) *Meaning of Life*
- 8) *Miracles*
- 9) *Leadership*
- 10) *Communion*
- 11) *History of UMC*
- 12) *Justice and Responsibility/
Worship Services*

TOPICS (comparison)



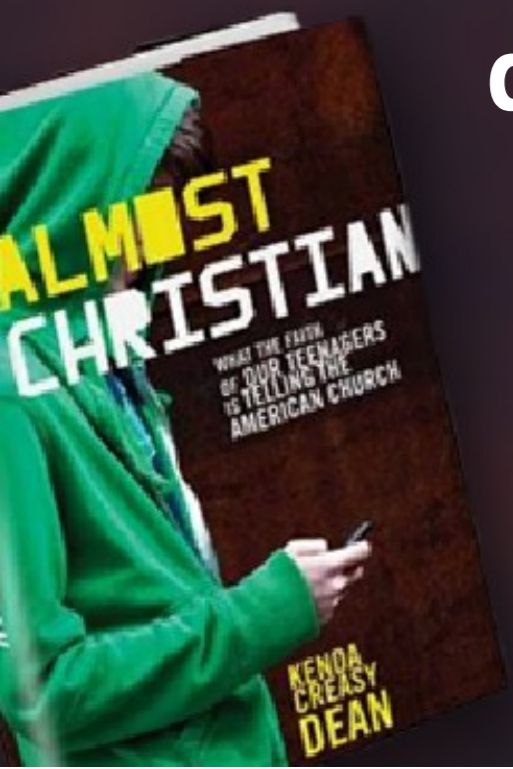
Expectations and Wishes (youth)

During confirmation, it is important for me...	agreement
to have my questions concerning faith taken seriously.	87%
to have a lot of fun.	81%
to have a Christian mentor or to be disciplined.	71%
to be allowed to decide with my peers what topics should be included.	59%



National Study of Youth and Religion

“... largest study of youth and religion ever done in the U.S.”

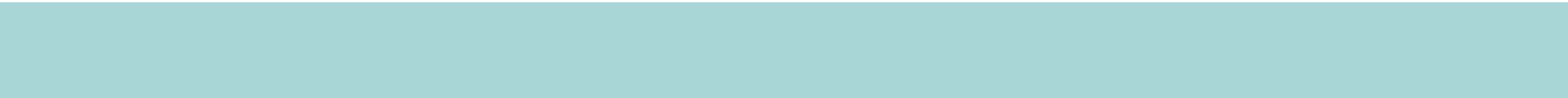


“In terms of faith, you get what you are.”
Teens tend to mirror the faith of their parents.

NEW WAYS FORWARD Or, Suggested Resolutions

- ❑ Goals: What IS confirmation?
 - ✓ The need for clarity
- ❑ Engage the parents at multiple levels.
 - ✓ St. Michael the Archangel in Colorado Springs
- ❑ Seek new methods of engaging confirmands in decision-making...
 - ✓ To give them ownership and to ensure expectations are both managed and fulfilled.

Confirmation as Graduation? ...



Confirmation as Graduation, or...?

