

**Title of Lesson:** Politics, Social Issues, Gender, Family and Religion

**Target Audience:** 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Time Required:** (1-2) 45 minute class periods.

**Goal:** Students will analyze how religious involvement is related to politics, social issues, gender, and family.

**Objective(s):** After documenting their expectations, students will use the 2010 General Social Survey to explore the relationship that religious involvement holds with specific survey questions on political identity and voting, support for welfare and legalizing marijuana, positions on same sex marriages and abortion, and views on same sex marriages and the ideal number of children, as well as their reported marital happiness.



## POLITICS, SOCIAL ISSUES, GENDER, FAMILY AND RELIGION

This lesson will ask you to examine your preconceptions about how religion is related to politics, social issues, gender and family.

### Objectives

After documenting your expectations, you will use the 2010 General Social Survey to explore the relationship religious involvement holds with specific survey questions on political identity and voting, support for welfare and legalizing marijuana, positions on same sex marriages and abortion, and finally views on same sex marriages and the ideal number of children, as well as respondents' reported marital happiness.

### Examining Your Preconceptions

To begin, let's examine your expectations on how religious involvement is related to the issues we will explore. On each of the continuums below designate where you think the following three groups would fall: 1) those who never or seldom attend worship services, 2) those who sometimes attend, and 3) those who attend nearly every week.

#### Politics:

Political identity  
Liberal ----- Conservative  
Percent voting in last election  
0% ----- 100%

#### Social Issues:

Marijuana should be legal:  
Yes ----- No  
Spending on welfare is  
Too little ----- Too much

#### Gender:

Abortions should be legal for any reason  
Yes ----- No  
How important the women's rights issue is to you  
Important ----- Not Important

**Family:**

Homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another:

Agree -----Disagree

Marital happiness

Very Happy ----- Not too happy

Ideal number of children

0 ----- 4 or more

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**Reviewing the Survey**

Now that you have stated your expectations, let's begin to look at some data based on a survey that was done in 2010.

We will be looking at data drawn from the General Social Survey.

Click [here](#) to go to a subset of the General Social Survey, and go to the Summary tab. Review the summary information and answer the following questions in order to better understand the survey.

**What year was the survey done?**

**How many people participated in the survey?**

**Data and Analysis**

We will be analyzing survey questions in order to compare and contrast how religion might shape a person's views and behaviors.

To begin, here is an example of how to analyze one question.

**Example Analysis for Question 95**

Go to the [GSS subset](#) for this learning module and click on the tab that says Codebook.

Scroll down to question 2. This question asks the respondents to rank their political views as liberal, moderate or conservative.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that they are liberal?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that they are moderate?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that they are conservative?**

Having answered the questions above, you could create a table like the one below.

<b>Political Identity</b>	
	<b>All Participants</b>
Liberal	
Moderate	
Conservative	

Keeping with the same survey question, click on *analyze results*. On this page we can compare the participants' responses based on a variety of categories. We are going to examine the data through the lens of religion. Scroll down to I-ATTEND. You can now create a table similar to the one below.

<b>Political Identity</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>About Weekly</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Liberal				
Moderate				
Conservative				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance relate with political identity? Compare these results to your preconceptions.

### Continuing the Analysis

Now you will analyze eight more questions on how religious involvement is related to other areas of social life. We will first do one more on politics and then turn to social issues, gender, and family. You may use the tables below to help organize your thinking.

Go back to the **Codebook** tab. Scroll down to question 3. This question asks the respondents whether they voted in 2008.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage voted?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage did not vote?**

Keeping with the same survey question, click on *analyze results*. How does religious attendance relate with voting?

<b>Voting in 2008</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>About Weekly</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Voted				
Did not vote				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance associate with voting? Compare these results to your preconceptions.

**Social Issues**

Go back to the codebook, and scroll down to question 4. This question asks the respondents whether they think marijuana use should be legal.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that marijuana should be legalized?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that marijuana should not be legalized?**

How does religious attendance relate with views on marijuana?

<b>Marijuana Use</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>About Weekly</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Should be legal				
Should not be legal				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance relate with attitudes about marijuana? Compare these results to your preconceptions.

Next, let's examine attitudes about spending on welfare. Scroll down to question 5. This question asks the respondents whether they think we spend too much, too little, or the right amount on welfare.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that we spend too little on welfare?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that we spend the right amount on welfare?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that we spend too much on welfare?**

How does religious attendance relate with views on welfare spending?

<b>Welfare spending</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>About Weekly</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Too little				
About right				
Too much				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance relate with attitudes about spending on welfare? Compare these results to your preconceptions.

**Gender**

Turning to gender, let's examine attitudes about abortion. Scroll down to question 6. This question asks the respondents whether they think a woman should be able to legally obtain an abortion for any reason.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that a woman should be able to legally obtain an abortion for any reason?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that a woman should not be able to legally obtain an abortion for any reason?**

How does religious attendance relate with views on abortion for any reason?

<b>Abortion for any reason</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>About Weekly</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Should be able to				
Should not be able to				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance associate with attitudes about having an abortion for any reason? Compare these results to your preconceptions.

Next, let's examine attitudes about the importance of women's rights. Scroll down to question 7. This question asks the respondents how important they think women's rights are.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that women's rights are one of the most important issues?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that women's rights are important?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that women's rights are not very important?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that women's rights are not important at all?**

How does religious attendance relate with views on women's rights?

Women's rights	Never or Seldom	Sometimes	About Weekly	TOTAL
Most important				
Important				
Not very important				
Not important at all				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance associate with attitudes about the importance of women's rights? Compare these results to your preconceptions.



**Family**

Turning to family life, let’s examine attitudes about whether homosexual couples should legally be able to marry. Scroll down to question 8. This question asks the respondents if homosexual couples should have the right to marry.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage neither agreed nor disagreed that homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that homosexual couples should not have the right to marry one another?**

How does religious attendance relate with views on homosexuals marrying?

<b>Homosexuals should have the right to marry</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>About Weekly</b>	<b>All Participants</b>
Agree				
Neither				
Disagree				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance associate with attitudes about homosexuals marrying? Compare these results to your preconceptions.

Now let's examine marital happiness. Scroll down to question 9. This question asks the respondents how happy their marriage is.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that their marriage is very happy?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that their marriage is pretty happy?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded that their marriage is not too happy?**

How does religious attendance relate with marital happiness?

<b>Marital happiness</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>About Weekly</b>	<b>All Participants</b>
Very happy				
Pretty happy				
Not too happy				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance associate with marital happiness? Compare these results to your preconceptions.

Finally, let's examine how many children are ideal for a family. Scroll down to question 10. This question asks the respondents what they think is the ideal number of children for a family.

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded with zero or one?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded with two?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded with three?**

**Out of those surveyed, what percentage responded with four or more?**

How does religious attendance relate with the ideal number of children that people want to have?

<b>Ideal number of children</b>	<b>Never or Seldom</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>About Weekly</b>	<b>All Participants</b>
0-1				
2				
3				
4+				

Based on the table above, how does religious attendance associate with the ideal number of children for a family? Compare these results to your preconceptions.