



A discussion guide to the research 'Talking Jesus'

'Extraordinary', 'gloomy', 'challenging', 'rubbish', 'interesting', 'surprisingly encouraging' and 'amazing' are all words that have been used to describe findings from the research 'Talking Jesus'.

'Shocking' is the word used by the authors in the Introduction about 'perceptions of Jesus, Christians and Evangelism in England'. They were so surprised by the initial survey of 1000 adults that they asked the researchers¹ to do it again with a larger sample²! The results were about the same - and are now presented in an online book/PDF from www.talkingjesus.org.



You can search online for a variety of articles about the research commended for reading by Presidents of Churches Together in England.³ This is a follow up to that, in 20 questions, to get you to read for yourself and consider the implications for your own ministry of 'Talking Jesus'. This is probably best done in a group – even 2 or 3 people. Select the questions as all 20 takes 90 mins ..

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Check out the hope of the authors at the end of the Introduction. Is this a hope you share? | 2 mins |
| 2. On p4 you will find background information about the survey. Does this raise any questions? | Ref only |
| 3. Summary headlines on p5 are key. Does anything there surprise/shock/challenge/excite you? | 10 mins |
| 4. The rest of the report is the evidence. P7 top right has figures re education. Is it a surprise? | 3 mins |
| 5. P8 is a map. Where do you live and do the figures re. 'Practicing Christians' feel 'right'? | 2 mins |
| 6. P9 suggests how many people think Jesus a real/fictional person? Does it change what we say? | 5 mins |
| 7. Middle of p10 graph has surprised some people. Does it surprise you? | 5 mins |
| 8. P11 suggests belief in the resurrection is more common than we might think. Discuss. | 3 mins |
| 9. Consider the most popular descriptions of Jesus (p 12). How 'positive' is this? | 2 mins |
| 10. What % (p13) of Christians believe it is a responsibility to talk of Jesus? Do you share this view? | 2 mins |
| 11. There has been much debate about confidence in the gospel (p14). Are you surprised? | 5 mins |
| 12. Middle of p 15 figure re frequency of evangelism has amazed some. Is this your experience? | 3 mins |
| 13. Self-defining 'Practicing Christian' may produce a natural bias (p15). Discuss if this is significant. | 2 mins |
| 14. Compare our perception of evangelism (p16/17) and the reception (p20/21). Is that expected? | 10 mins |
| 15. Some articles question evangelism and the response (p20). Do the Gospels shed light on this? | 3 mins |
| 16. A critical chart is bottom p20 re positive/negative experience. How good is a '1 in 5' interest? | 10 mins |
| 17. 'Shocked' was a word used about middle p21 in an article. Are you shocked by this statement? | 2 mins |
| 18. 'Faith journey' findings (p22) might make a difference to evangelism. How should it? | 5 mins |
| 19. The influences to 'become a Christian' (p23) have surprised some. Are you surprised? | 5 mins |
| 20. The Ten Recommendations (p25) are for church leaders. Do you agree with them? | 10 mins |

Given that all research probably has some room for error and bias, the general findings of 'Talking Jesus' should make a difference to the way we talk about Jesus and do evangelism as churches and Churches Together groups.

What might you do as a result of this discussion?

Download this discussion guide in Word or PDF: www.cte.org.uk/talkingjesus

Jim Currin, Capt.,CA., Evangelisation, Mission and Media, Churches Together in England.

¹ Barna Group and ComRes

² 2,545 English adults ages 18 and older who are 'nationally representative', and 1,592 self-defining 'practicing Christians'

³ http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/456209/Home/News/Latest_news_articles/Church_leaders_call.aspx