

# Confirmation and its preparation – Expectations and effects

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religio  
altenberg Institut  
für Kinder- und Jugendpastoral  
im Erzbistum Köln

# 1. Context

- Roman-catholic diocese in Germany (Cologne)
- Age Ø 16 years
- Situated in local parish
- Preparation takes place before confirmation
- Duration: 3-6 month
- Led by lay ministers and supported by volunteers
- Weekly gatherings in small groups or monthly meetings for a whole day

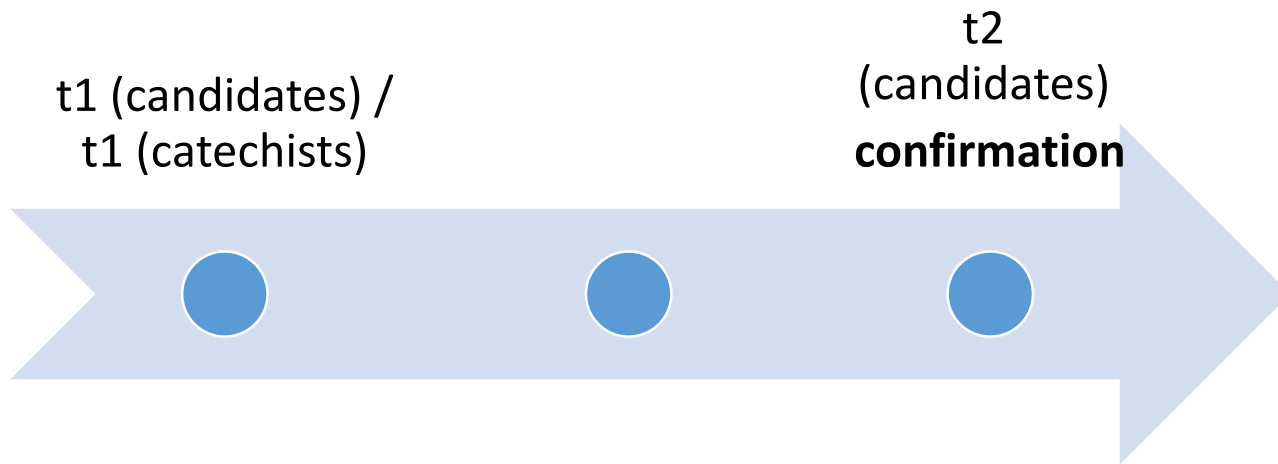


## 2. Aim and methodology of the project

- Main question:
  - Do have our courses any effects?
- Other aspects:
  - What do the *juveniles* expect?
  - What do the *volunteers* expect?
  - What do *both* think about confirmation?
  - How do the *juveniles* value the course they attended?
  - Are there any effects/developements?

## 2. Aim and methodology of the project

- Qualitative survey, questionnaire
- Two measurement points: at the beginning and at the end of the preparation course



- Mainly standard questions (4-step-scale)

# 3. Status of research

- Catechesis suffers from an empirical and theoretical deficit
- Catechesis of confirmation is the subject of several systematical-, liturgical- and practical-theological works of the recent years; in addition, numerous guidelines in the German-speaking dioceses
- Some dioceses have carried out smaller surveys (Regensburg 2013, Limburg 2007/08, Speyer 2006, Essen 2004)

# 4. Hypotheses

- **Expectations of the juveniles** are unspecific. Essentially, it is about a new opportunity to come to faith (anthropological dimension of confirmation). Less ecclesial aspects of Confirmation are desired or expected (ecclesiological dimension).
- **Expectation of parents** is often shaped by the desire for relief in the process of religious socialisation/education. It can be assumed that traditional motives predominate in many cases.
- Aim to **understand Confirmation** from the idea of mission (ecclesiological dimension of Confirmation; cf. Höring 2011) is therefore rather met with scepticism among young people and parents than among the full-time staff.
- In principle, it can be assumed that the **understanding of Confirmation** depends on one's own image of the Church and God.
- **No findings** on how newly confirmed persons understand confirmation in retrospect (conclusions on the effectiveness of the catechetical process).
- This also applies to the motives of those who did not sign up for confirmation or who left during the course.

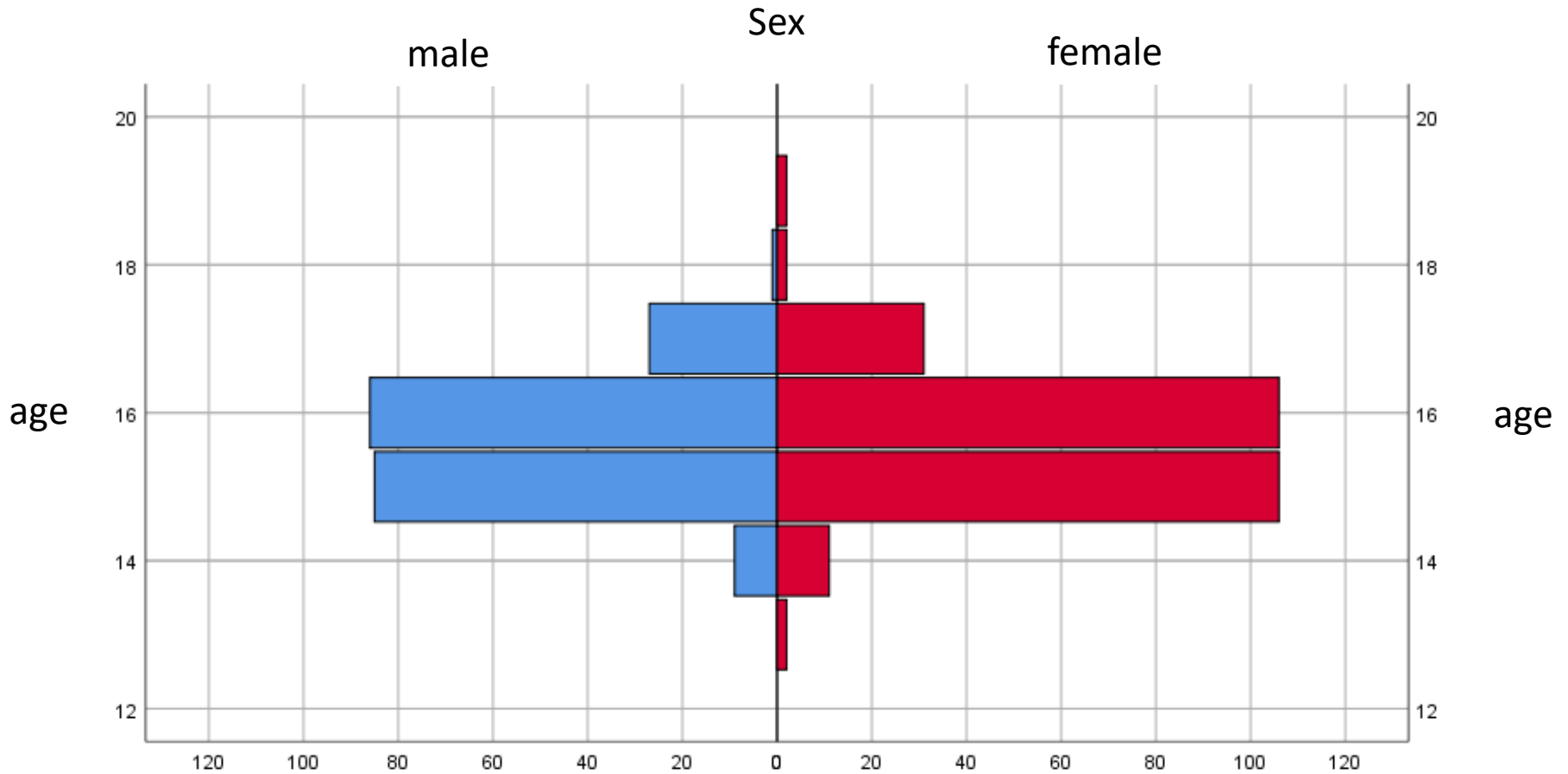
# 5. Key Findings

- Sample:
  - 468 juveniles in 11 parishes (193 questionnaires for t1 and t2-comparison)
  - 30 catechists in 5 parishes
- Period: Autumn 2017 – Spring 2019, ongoing

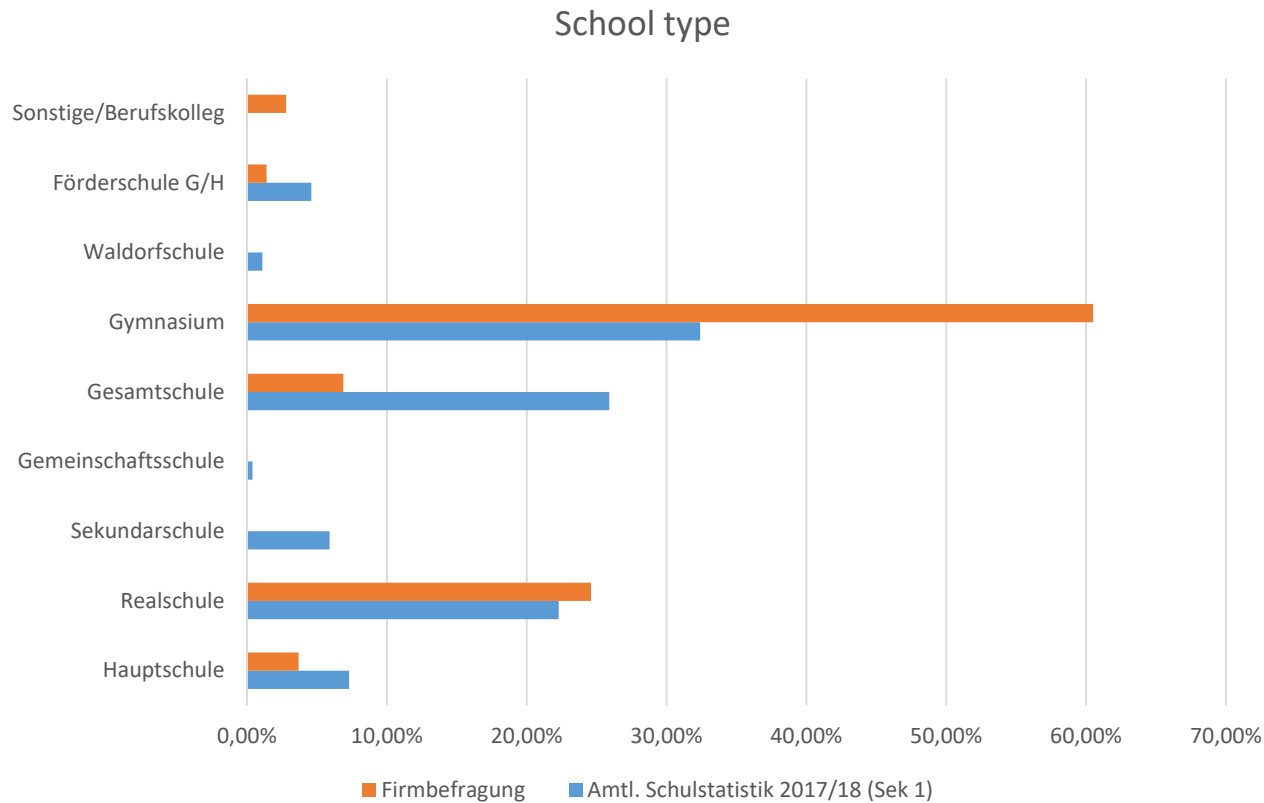
Who's coming?



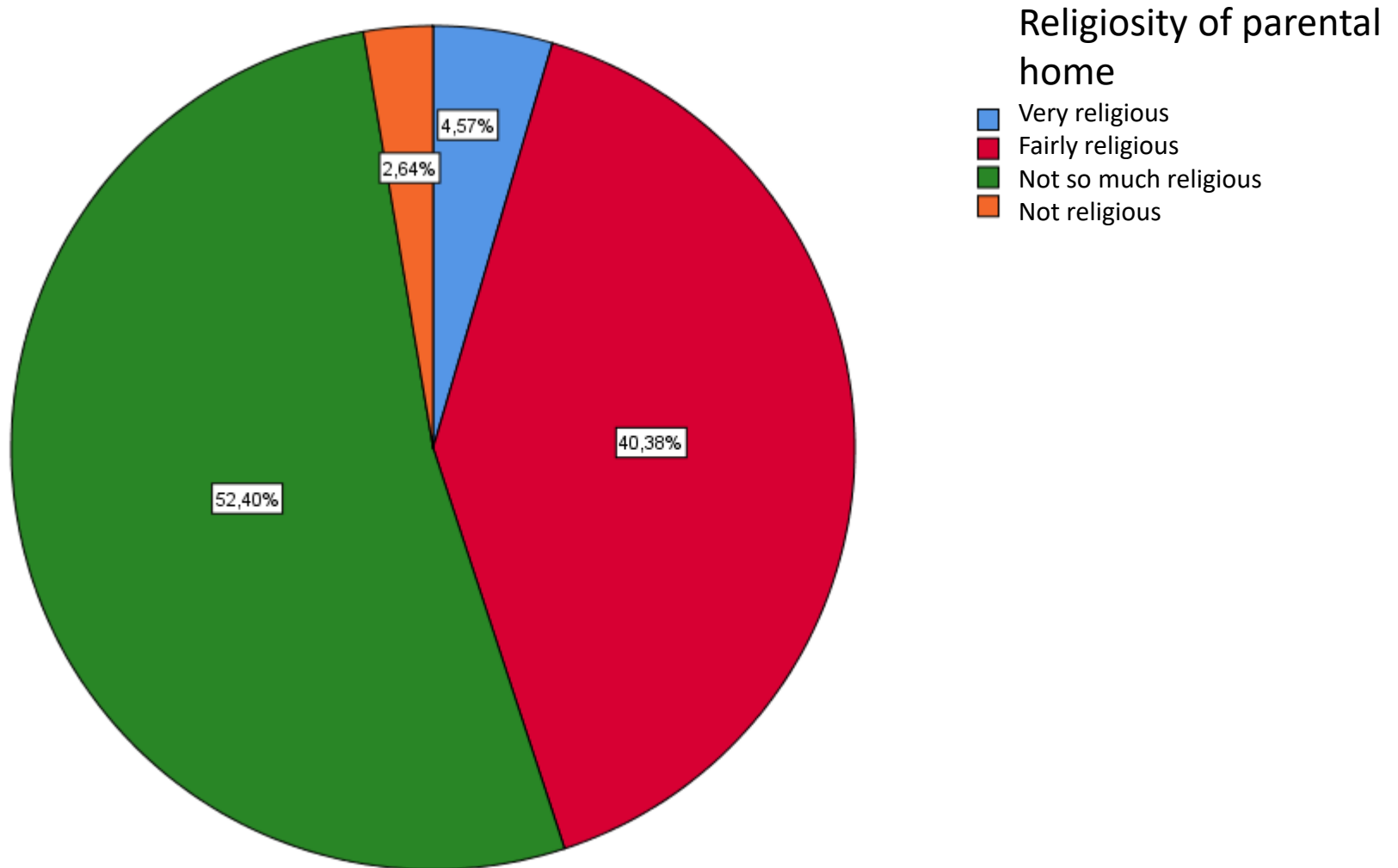
# Who's coming? – the target group



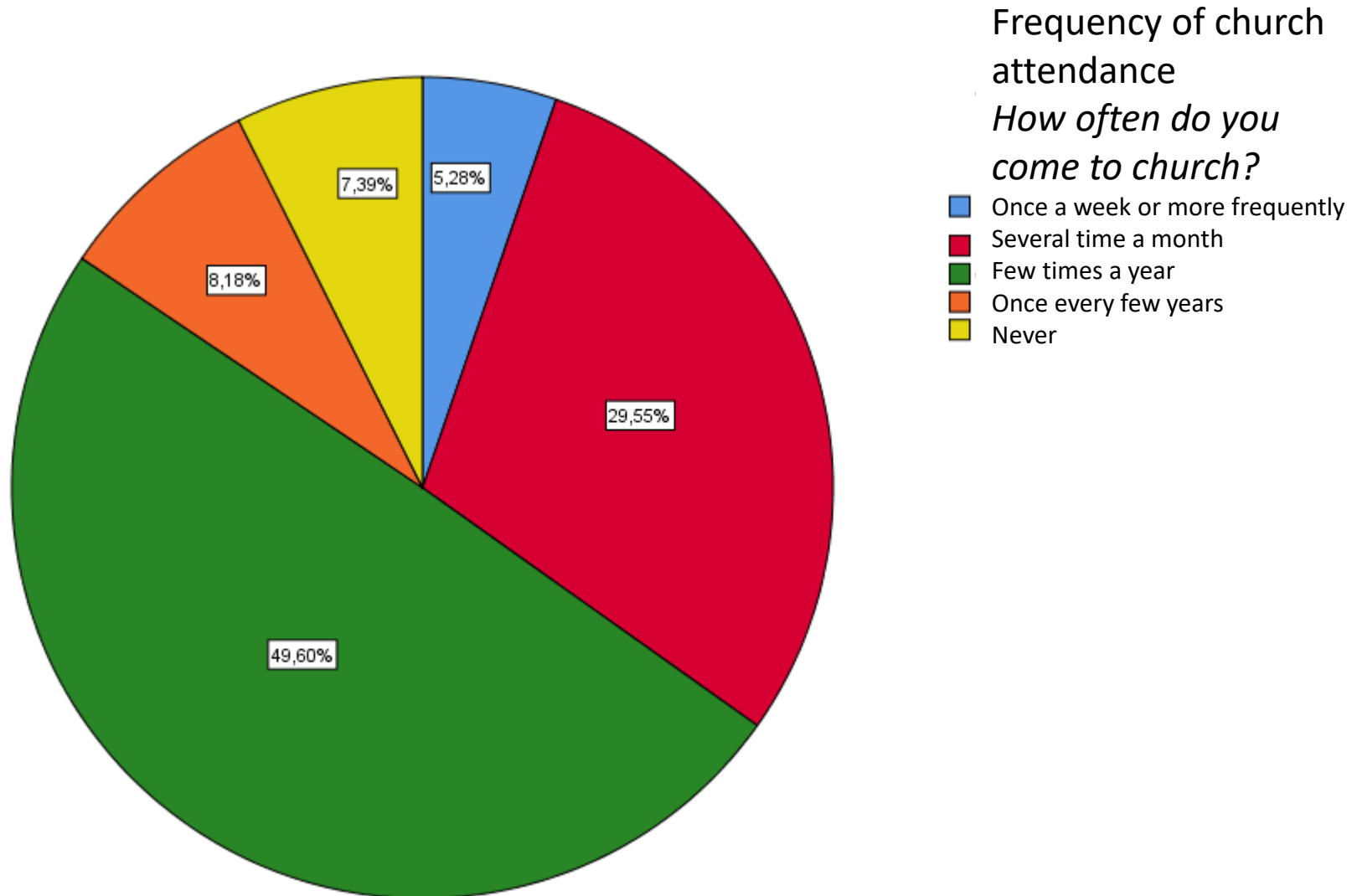
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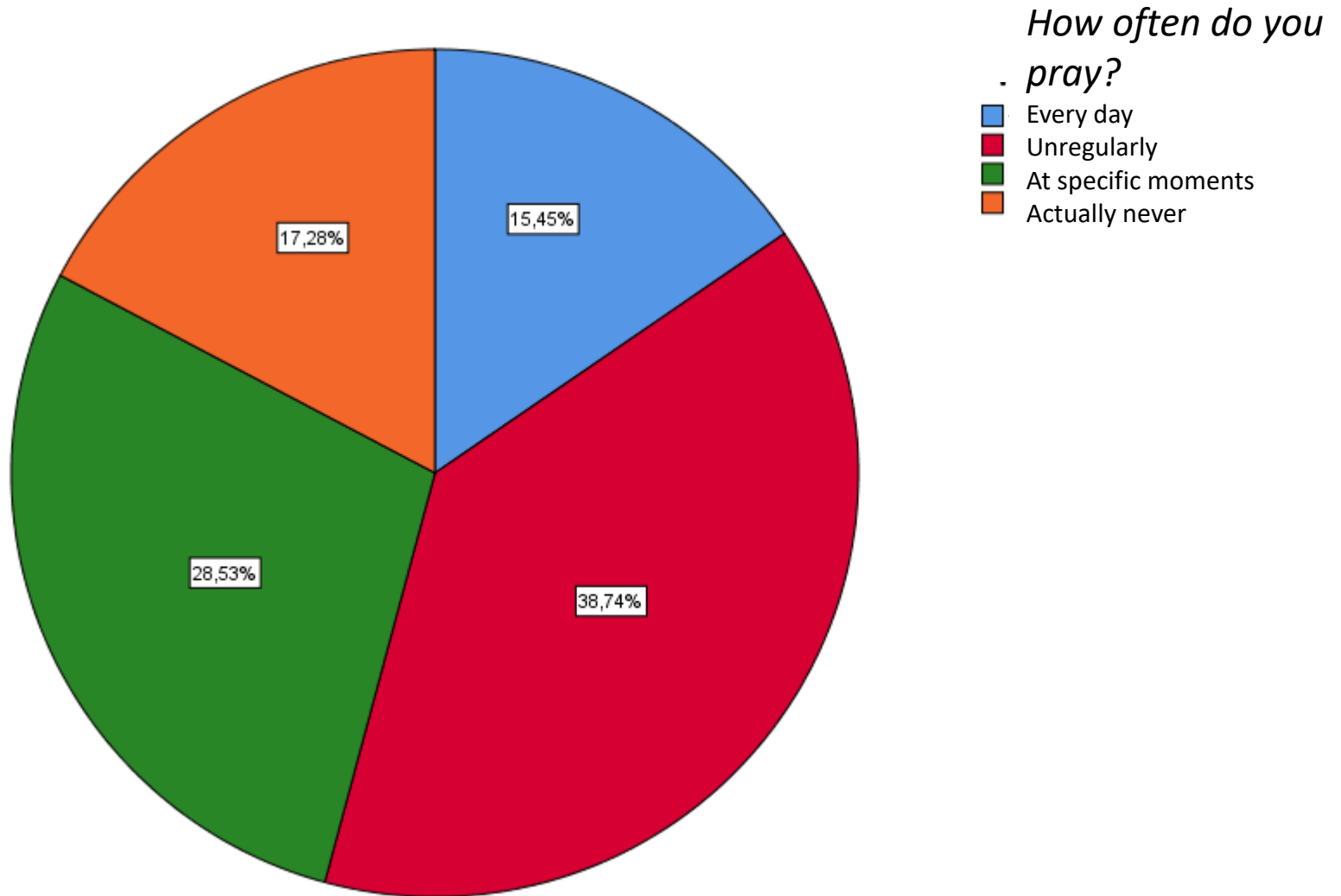
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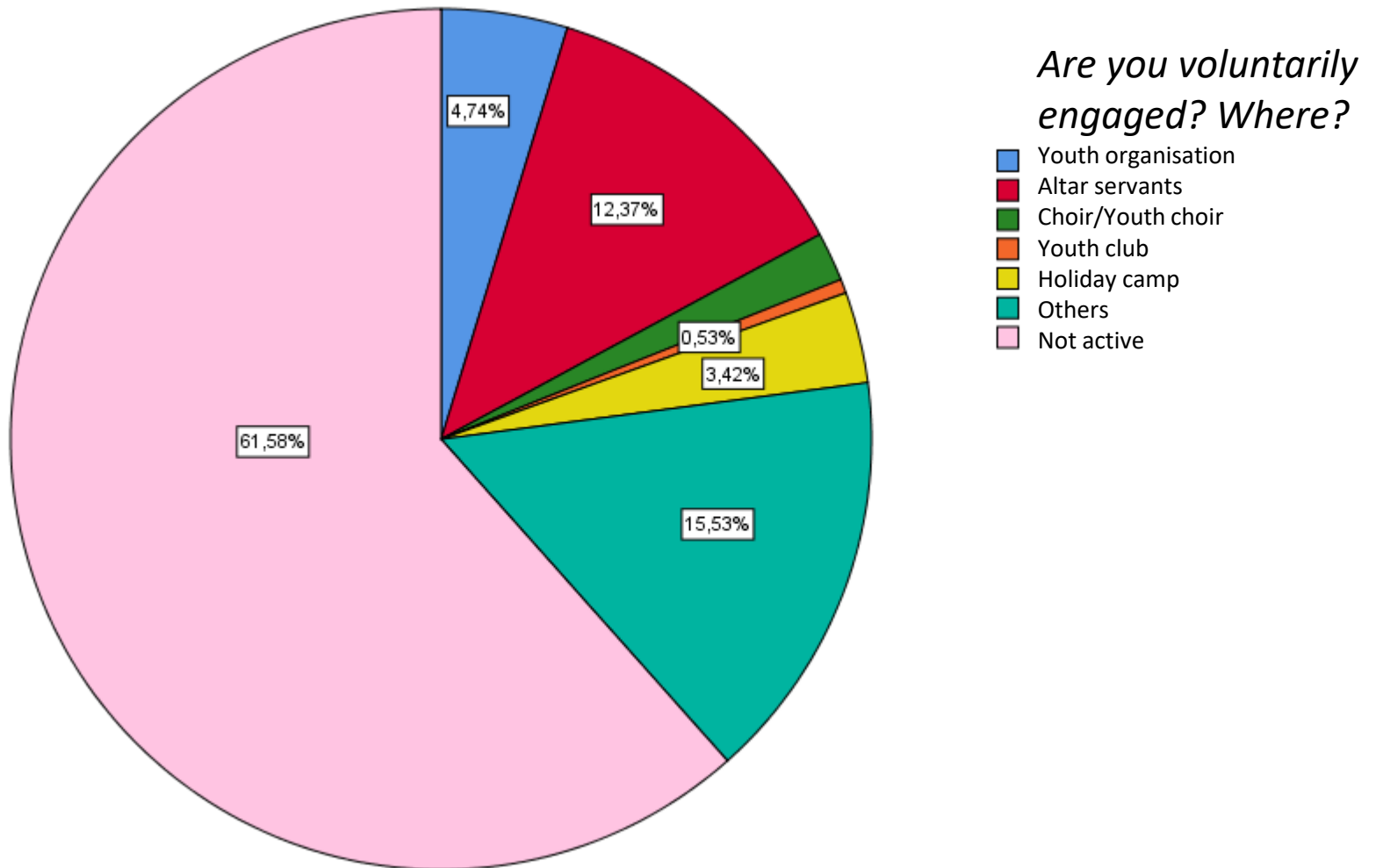
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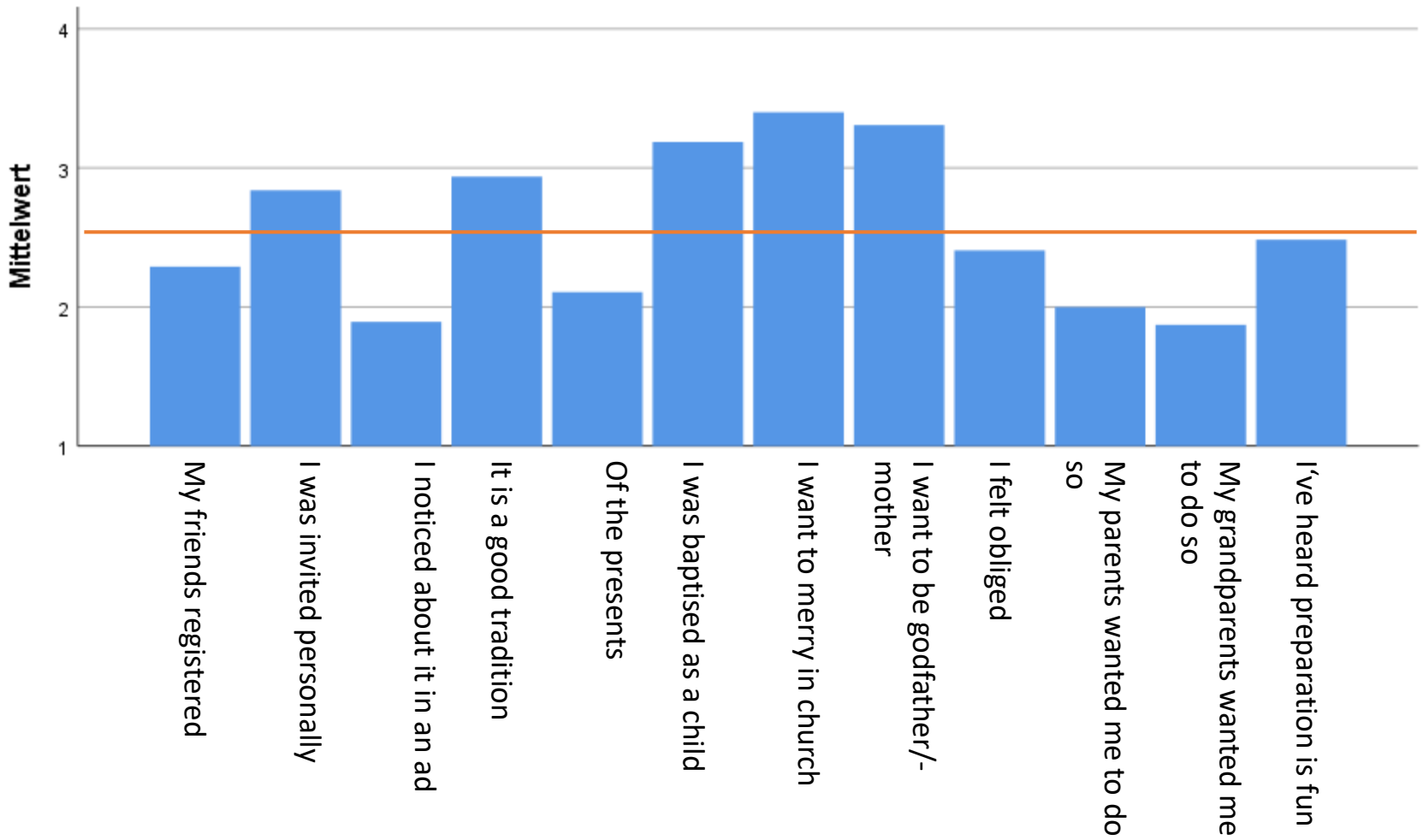


# Who's coming? – the target group



# What's it all about? – Motifs and Expectations

„They all come just for the presents.“



I registered for the preparation course because ...

4 = I agree entirely; 1 = I do not agree



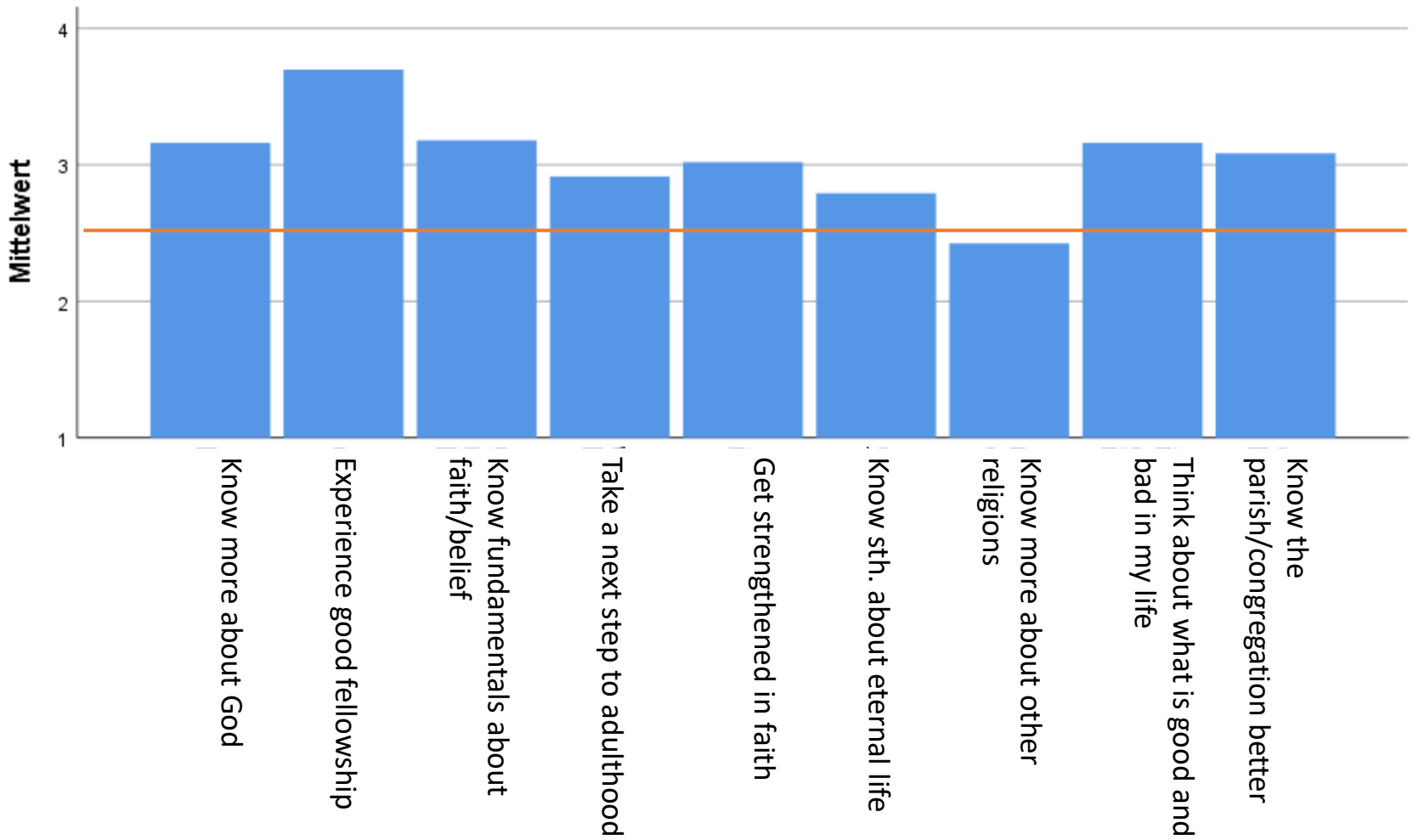
# Registration motifs

- No differences between age-groups ( $\leq 15$  /  $\geq 16$ )
- No differences between German-born and migrants
- But differences regarding previous experiences in church (church attendance)

High (once a week or more)	Low (acutally never)
++ Heard confirmation is fun	++ Presents
++ Saw an ad	++ Parents
++ Felt obliged	++ Friends

# Why are you here?

„They all have no interest in nothing.“



During the course I would like to ...

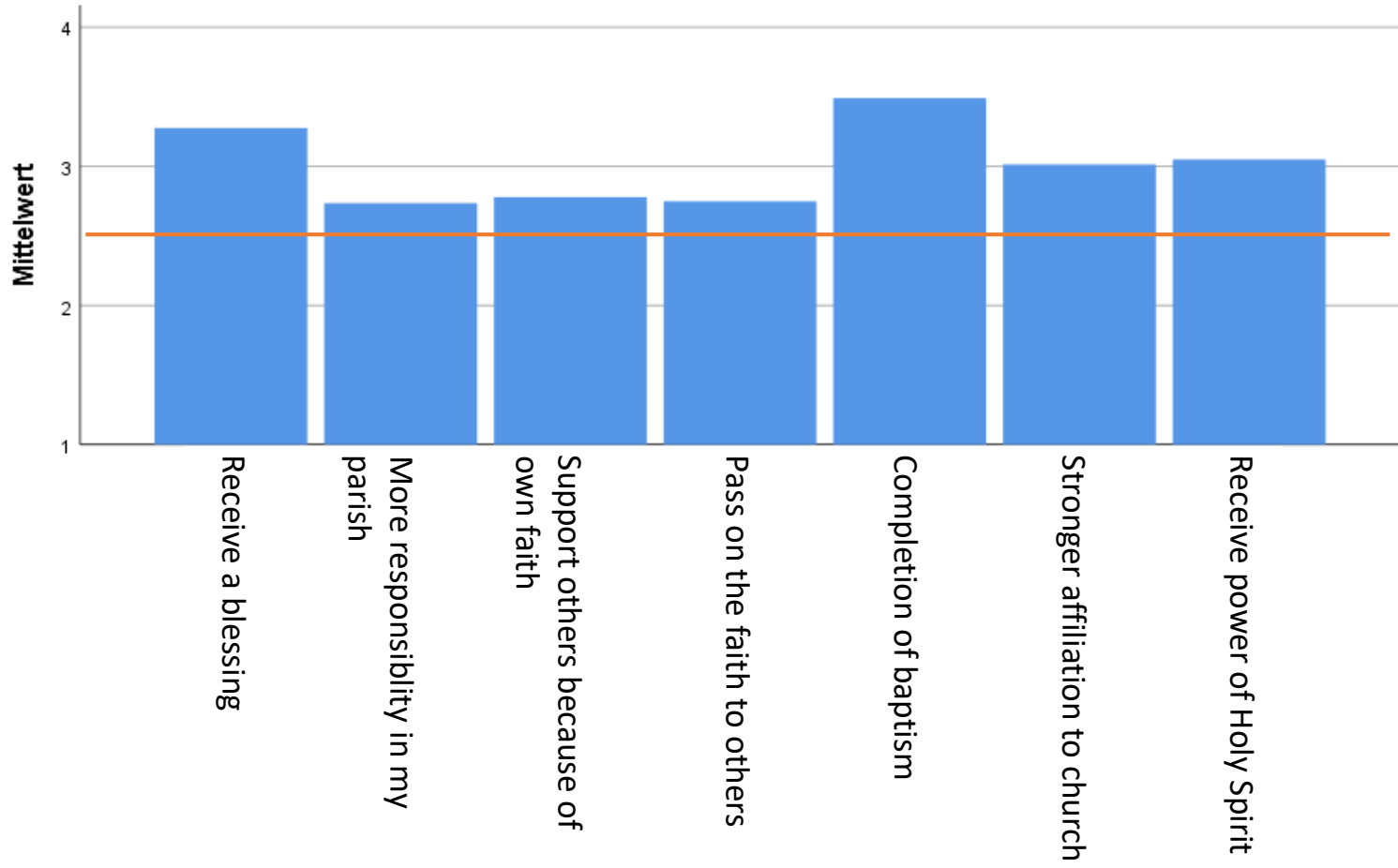
4 = I agree entirely; 1 = I do not agree

# What is confirmation?

„Confirmation for me is...“

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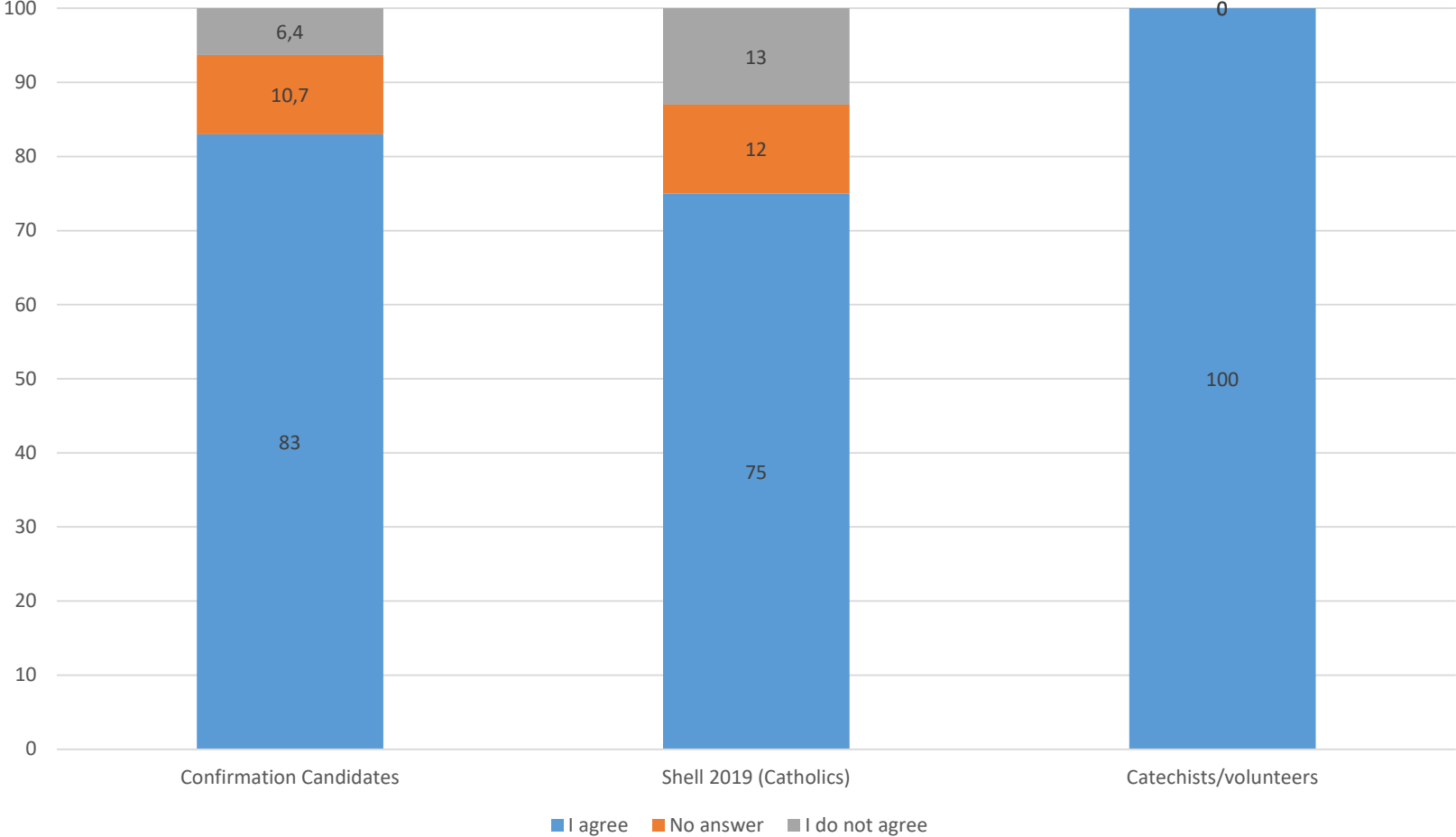
(Candidates t1)



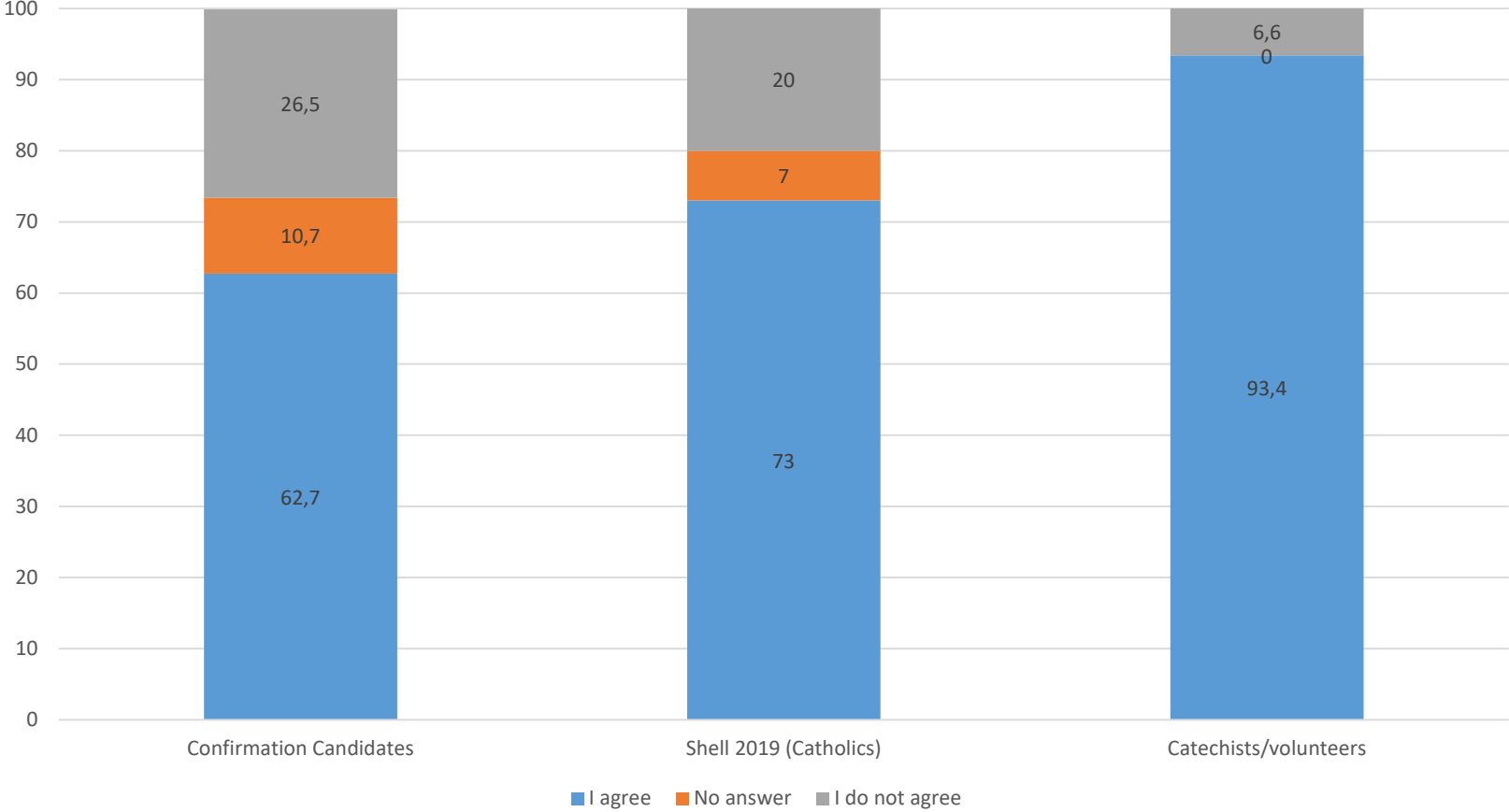
# Jesus yes – Church no?

## Attitudes towards Church and Faith

### I appreciate that there is church

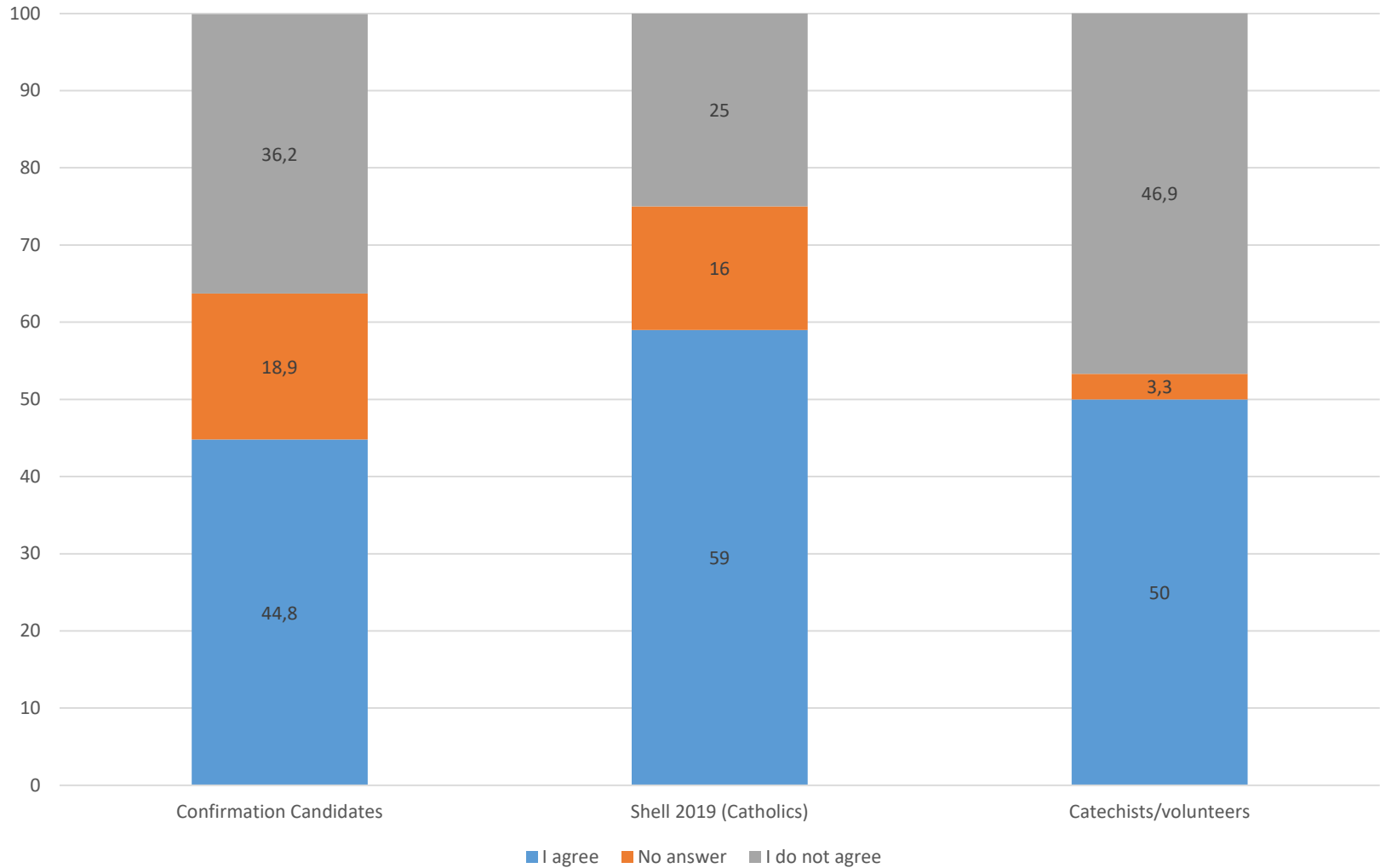


### Church has to change if there shall be future

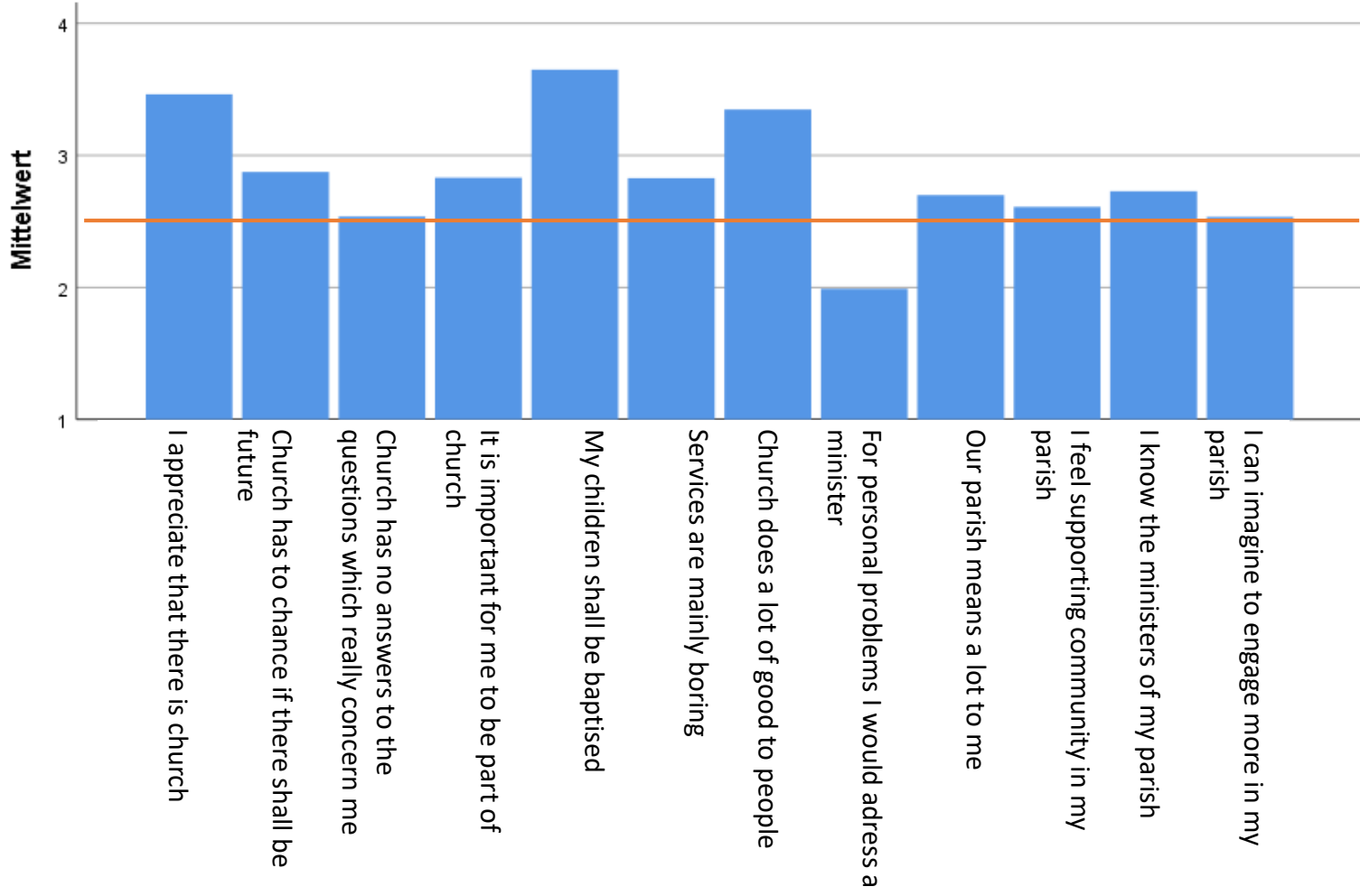




### Church has no answers for the questions which really concern me



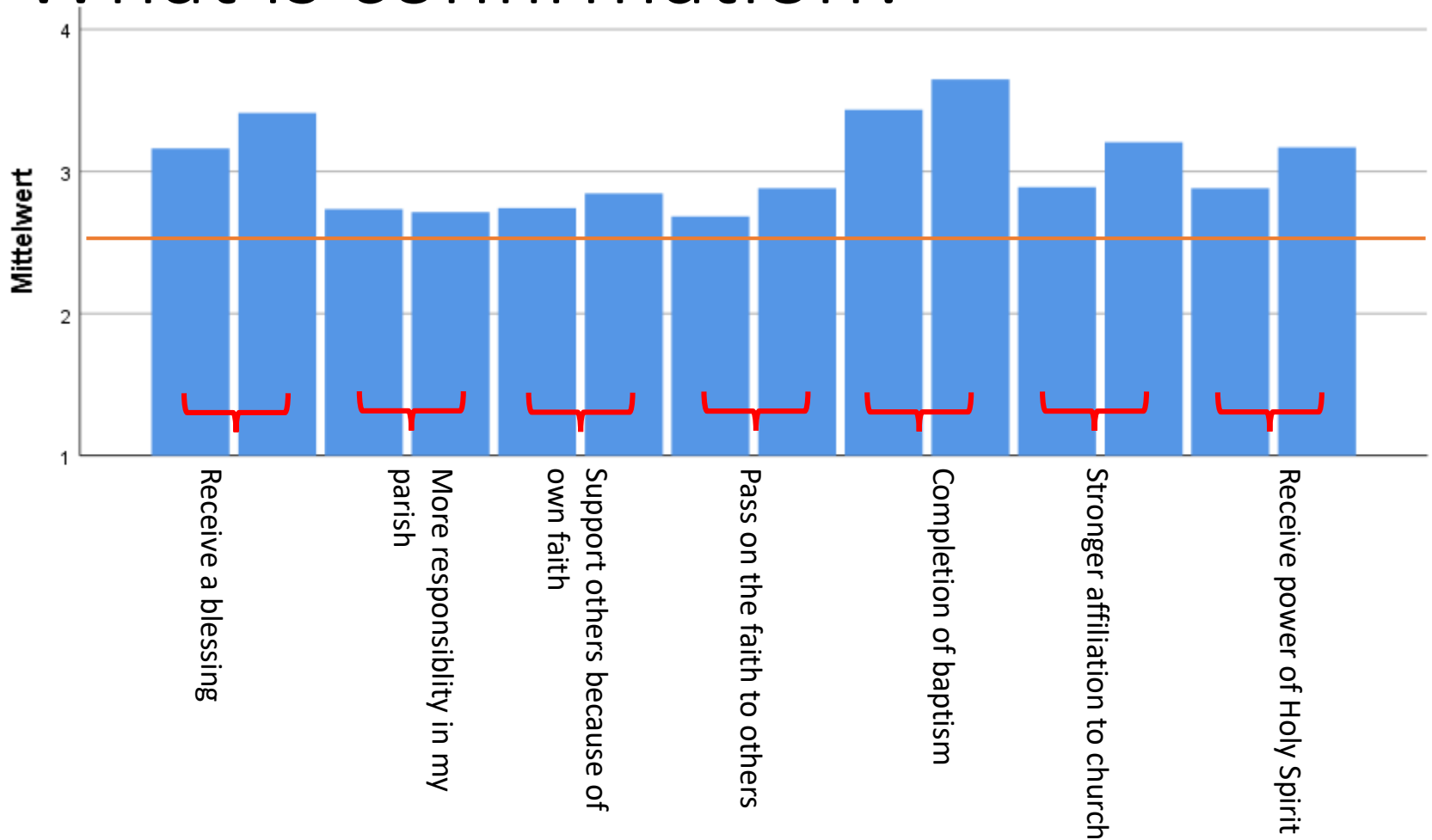
# Church (Candidates t1)



# Developements

„Has catechesis any effect?“

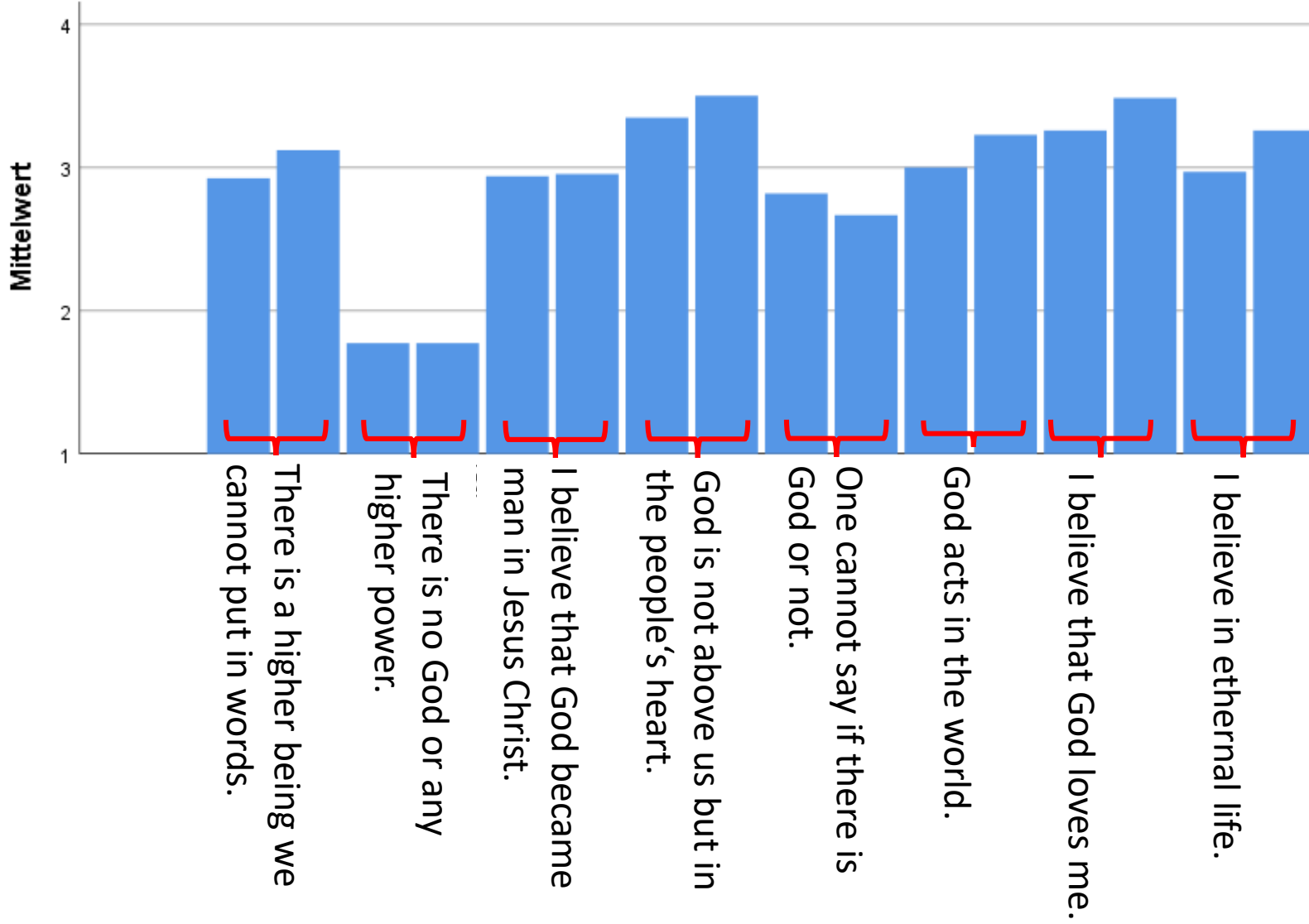
# What is confirmation?

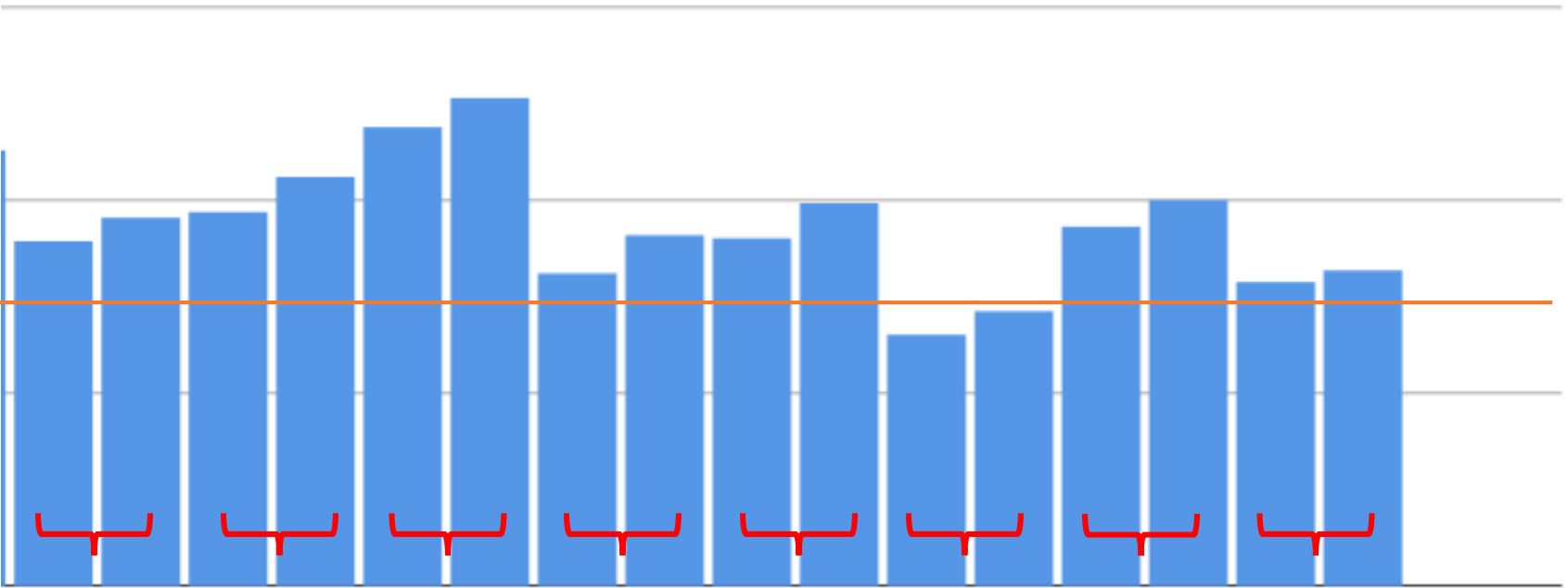


Confirmation for me is ... (t1 / t2)

4 = I agree; 1 = I do not agree

# Image of God (Candidates t1/t2)





Jesus is risen from the dead

That God forgives sins is comforting to me

There are people how feel the presence of God

I recall moments when I feel the presence of God

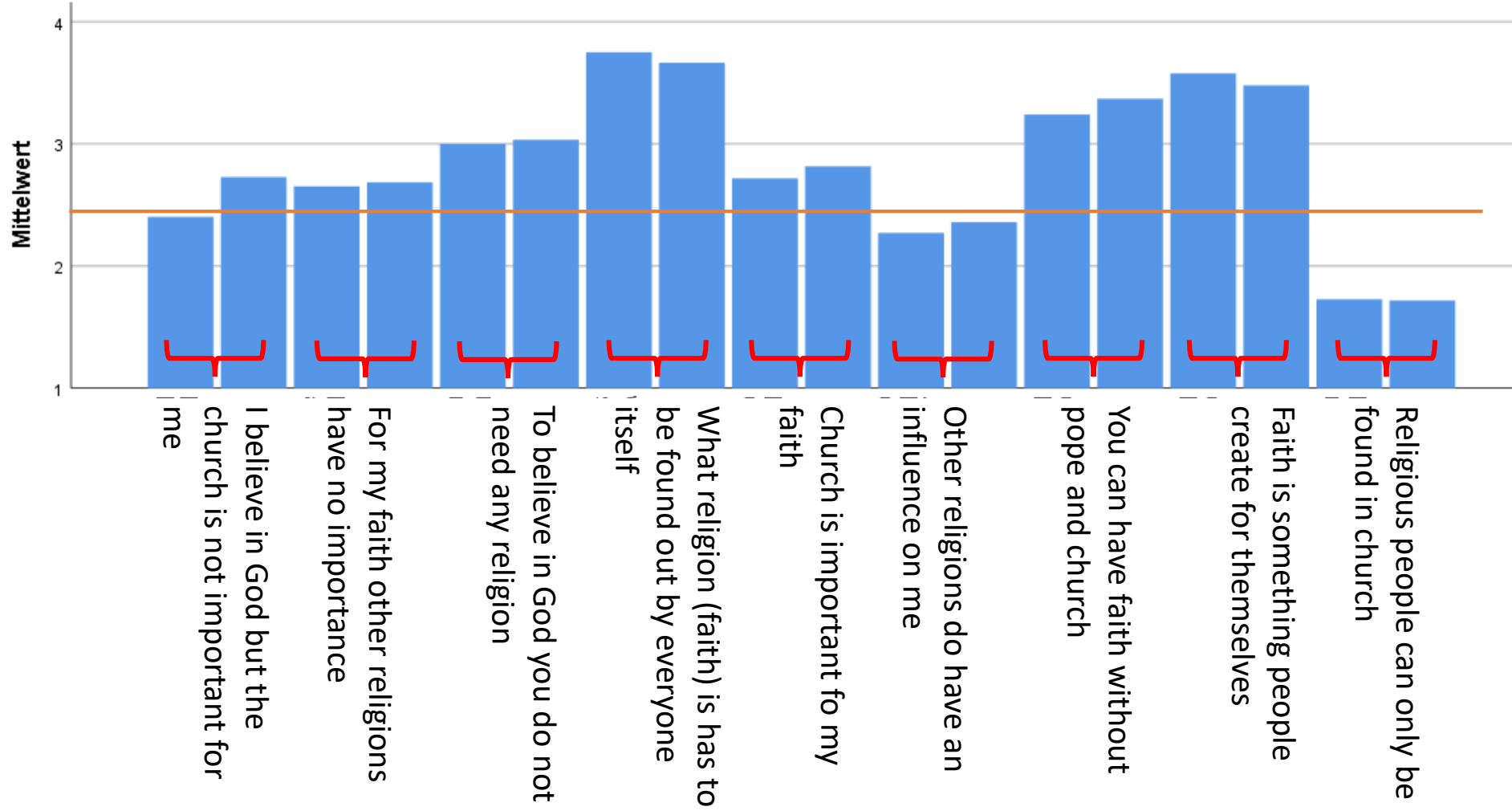
I want to feel the presence of God more deply

Praying seems difficult to me

When others talk about their faith I become curious

I would appreciate more opportunities to experience faith

# Church and Faith (Candidates t1/t2)



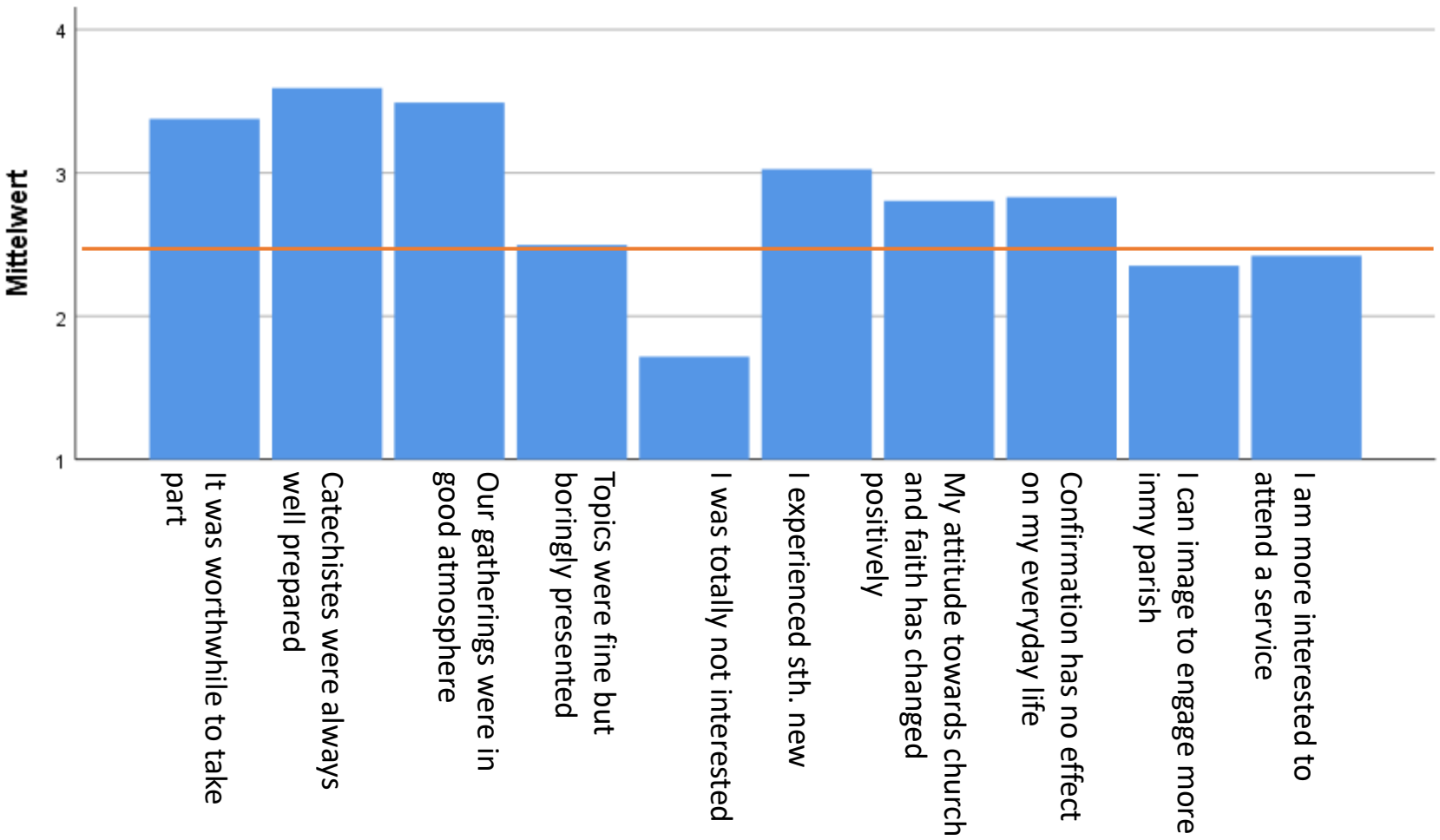
## Church and Faith (t1/t2)

4 = I agree; 1 = I do not agree

# Evaluation

„In the end all are happy it's over “





## Feedback

4 = I agree; 1 = I do not agree

# 6. Conclusion

## 6.1 Results in short

- Confirmation attracts more distant, but also a smaller group of church-related young people. Heterogeneity can be an opportunity and a burden.
- The young people do bring a certain interest. One last chance to prove the relevance of church and faith. Risk of failure!
- Understanding of confirmation rather conventional-individualistic. Missionary and ecclesial aspects are less important.
- Looking back, satisfaction is quite high, especially with regard to the catechists. This confirms the personal dimension, which is fundamental for catechesis.
- Practical consequences seem rather small.

## 6.2 Recommendations and Questions to the Practice

- Developing differentiated concepts that meet the needs of the participants
- Making Christian faith a practical life experience
- Volunteers are indispensable - mentoring as a form of catechesis
- Broadening the view beyond the confirmation ceremony
- Attracting young people as catechists

# Come in contact

- [www.religio-altenberg.de](http://www.religio-altenberg.de)
- <https://www.religio-altenberg.de/forschung/evaluation-von-firmvorbereitung/>

## Kontakt & Information

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