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**Senior Christian Studies within Australian Lutheran secondary schools**

**A report on the surveys of principals, heads of CS, CS teachers, and senior CS students**

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# Introduction

In early 2013 the LEA formation working party requested a major study to be completed on senior secondary Christian Studies within Lutheran schools. The study was undertaken through the Australian Lutheran Institute for Theology and Ethics (ALITE) based within Australian Lutheran College. Mark Worthing, working with Anne Dohnt, served as the main investigator for this project. After an initial round of data collected in 2013 through an extensive online survey a preliminary report was prepared. The study was then expanded to include another round of surveys, conducted in 2014, and the study of a selection of Lutheran colleges. The site visits of colleges aimed at the gathering of qualitative data in order to better tell the story of what is currently happening with Christian Studies within Lutheran schools. In total, 45 principals and heads of CS, 34 CS teachers, and 755 year 11 and 12 CS students participated in the two-year study.

In the course of this research a number of people and institutions have been of great assistance to the primary researchers. We would like to acknowledge and thank the LEA national staff, the staffs of the three regions. We would also like to thank the many principals, heads of Christian Studies and Christian studies teachers who gave of their time, and more importantly, access to their year 11 and 12 students. Also, Kathy Bensted, a PhD student with University of Divinity, worked in the final stages of the project collating and updating data for the report and Tanya Wilson, from the LEA national office, was of great assistance throughout the project, especially in help with setting up and gathering information from the electronic surveys.

The report that follows, while focusing on year 11 and 12 Christian Studies, has implications for the entire Christian Studies program. The commitment to Christian Studies as an essential and distinctive component of the identity of Lutheran schools was clear everywhere we went and at all levels. The question of how to most effectively conduct a Christian Studies curricular program within the present educational climate and the changing demographics of Lutheran schools, however, was seen to be a complex one. It is the hope of the research team that this report will assist those involved at all levels of Christian Studies within Lutheran schools in meeting the important challenge of providing a Christian Studies program, especially at the senior secondary level, that is not only academically rigorous and in keeping with our Lutheran identity, but is also transformational for all students.

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# Senior Christian Studies in Australian Lutheran schools

At the direction of the LEA Staff Formation Working Party, the Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) Assistant Director: Formation, the Australian Lutheran Institute for Theology and Ethics have undertaken a survey of key stakeholders in senior secondary Christian Studies within Australian Lutheran schools. Principals, heads of Christian Studies, Christian Studies teachers, and current year 11 and 12 Christian Studies students were surveyed in June and July 2013, and again from June to September 2014. The principal researcher for this project was Rev Dr Mark Worthing, senior researcher, ALITE. He was assisted by Anne Dohnt, LEA Assistant Director: Formation. The report is intended to provide important information to key decision makers within LEA with regard to the current state of senior level Christian Studies and to inform future decision making in relation to provision of Christian Studies in years 11 and 12 in Lutheran schools.

# Review of relevant literature and existing data

Studies across various sectors have long shown that, especially among high school level students, Religious Studies, (or Christian Studies) consistently ranks among the least favourite subjects of students. For educators within a faith-based system like Lutheran Education Australia this is a significant issue as our faith commitment is identified as a primary reason for our schools’ existence. It is what makes our educational offering distinctive.

In a BLEA sponsored study conducted by Mike Middleton, *Lutheran Schools at Millennium’s Turn: A Snapshot 1999-2000*, Christian Studies rated clear last among secondary students choosing between 13 possible subject areas. Secondary students also rated it equal last with regard to relevance for their future lives (together with drama and art) and, worryingly, it was rated among the lowest subjects along with PE, home economics, drama and art all with under 3% favourable response to the question ‘which subjects make you think the most?’ Christian Studies was again ranked among the very bottom subjects when asked what subject adults seemed to think most important, and was clear last in response to the question ‘Which subject gives you the greatest sense of pride?’

The Middleton report concluded that “the position of Christian Studies in Lutheran schools is at best problematic as far as students are concerned. Student responses about perceptions of their schooling show that they believe their school is doing pretty well in helping them ‘know about God.’ … However, when it comes to Christian Studies, the picture is quite different – indeed almost frightening” (p 14). Middleton demonstrated the place of Christian Studies in student perception by plotting a scatter graph ranking all subjects by popularity and by how much they make students think. In this graph (reproduced below) physical education and industrial arts are the highest scoring subjects for popularity, but score very low in terms of making the students think. Maths is the highest scoring subject for making students think, but is not very popular. English and science have a nice mix of making students think and being reasonably popular. The lowest possible result for a subject would be to have a near zero score for both popularity and making students think. Sitting in the bottom left hand corner of the graph is this unenviable position is Christian Studies, with the only subject anywhere close to it being LOTE (language other than English).



The students surveyed in the present study in years 11 and 12 would not yet have been in preschool and reception when the Middleton study was conducted. The results of the current study indicate that, form the perspective of the students, little has changed since 1999.

In 2002 an audit of Christian Studies was conducted for LEA by Anne Dohnt, then National Christian Studies Coordinator. This was a survey of Christian Studies teachers and school leaders. It found that a range of strengths and weaknesses existed within Christian Studies as identified by the teachers and school leaders. The key strengths were the recognition of Christian Studies as a KLA (key learning area), enthusiastic teachers, the LIFE curriculum used at that time, support of heads of department and Christian Studies key teachers, strong support from the leadership in some of the schools, and the view that Christian Studies was well resourced.

The key needs or weaknesses identified in the study included the need for greater access to PD for Christian Studies teachers, the need for all Christian Studies teachers to understand the purpose and importance of the area, the need for all teachers to meet LEA accreditation requirements, the need for school leadership to support Christian Studies as a KLA and see it as a rigorous subject that is well supported through staff, time and financial allocation, and finally, the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of key teachers and heads of department. Significantly, we will see that the results of this current study, conducted over a decade later, indicate that these remain among the significant weaknesses that need to be addressed.

While the audit did not reveal how students perceived Christian Studies, it did show some important strengths in the areas of staff, leadership and curriculum. But it also indicated that the level of support, qualification of Christian Studies teachers, and curriculum used tended to vary significantly across the schools surveyed. Indeed, the audit found that a small group of schools were using and very happy with the LIFE curriculum and wanted no change, and another small group were well allocated for in terms of time, staff, PD, etc. The audit found, however, that the majority of schools were ‘struggling to support the subject and its teachers’ and expressed an urgent need for ongoing development at many different levels. This included recognition of the importance of the subject, development of its teachers’ understandings of the contributions Christian Studies makes to the curriculum, professional development of Christian Studies teacher so they are well qualified to teach the subject’ (Christian Studies Audit Report, 2002, p 3).

A study outside LEA that is particularly significant for our present research is Marian de Souza’s *Some Years 10-12 students’ perceptions and experiences of their religious education programs: Implications for curriculum development and planning*, in *Journal of Religious Education* 57:1 (2009), p 48-59. De Souza’s study was conducted in seven Catholic high schools in Victoria in 2007 and followed on from a similar study conducted in 1995. A number of significant changes to the Religious Education (RE) curriculum meant some improved responses, though de Souza noted much remained to be done. As the study was conducted in a church-based school system in Australia and focused on the perceptions of year 10-12 students, it is of particular interest as a benchmark for our own results. She noted that the then-current Catholic education guidelines describe RE as ‘a subject to be taught with the same rigour as other disciplines’ (p 50). She finds mixed results among student responses as to the extent this was being achieved, including that only 18% said they spent as much time studying for RE as for other subjects. The most popular learning strategies identified by the students were: discussions, films and DVDs, retreats, and meditation. Written assignments, oral presentations, and preparation of worship services and formal prayers ranked lowest.

Some interesting comparative statistics for our own study are that, of 401 respondents, she found that 49% felt RE had helped them develop a better appreciation of religion and 70% agreed that RE had helped them understand the role of religion in the lives of Australians from different cultural backgrounds and 42% felt their faith in Jesus had developed through RE (p 52f). Further, 52% were positive about learning about other faiths and 61% said religious education was a lifelong learning process. Intriguingly, however, only 56% of students thought RE classes were important, while 51% said RE classes were interesting and 40% said they were uninteresting (p 54f.). These results are among the best student responses to RE we have come across and the structure of the RE curriculum in the Melbourne Diocese, where the study was largely conducted, may merit further study.

The results of the Sousa study, together with results of our highest performing Lutheran schools in the area of senior secondary Christian Studies, provide the most tangible benchmarks available to measure the success of our Christian Studies programs. These results show what is possible in Christian Studies within church-based Australian secondary schools. Comparisons with satisfaction/success levels of other curriculum areas (eg, Science, English, Music, etc) are of less value in terms of benchmarking because the nature, contexts and challenges of these curriculum areas are very different to that of CS. For the same reasons, leaders in Maths or History curriculum areas would not use results of CS or other curriculum areas as significant benchmarks for their areas.

A number of reasons have been put forward for the low standing of Christian Studies among secondary students (Catholic students in Victoria not withstanding!). In no particular order, they are:

* Lack of consensus in schools as to what should happen in Christian Studies classes – focus on community service? development of personal spirituality? life skills? rigorous intellectual focus, faith development, learning about Christianity? (cf. *Christian Studies Issues* paper by D Jacqueline)
* Lack of clarity and consistency about curriculum content to be covered. In the case of Lutheran schools, this lack of clarity exists in spite of the existence of a *Christian Studies Curriculum Framework* (CSCF).
* Lack of motivation and resistance among students. ‘The challenge is to convince students that Christian Studies is a worthy subject although it does not contribute to the score needed for entrance into further education whether it be TAFE, universities or private tertiary providers.’ (*Christian Studies Issues* paper)
* Lack of recognition of the ‘changed spiritual situation’. For many, but not all, it is relatively secular, eclectic, subjective, individualistic and self-reliant; there is a strong interest in achieving a desirable lifestyle but little interest in connection with the church (Hughes 2007; Crawford and Rossiter 2006; G Rossiter, *Journal of Religious Education* 58(2) 2010, p 26)
* Differing views and philosophies on how to staff the Christian Studies department. For example, the non-specialist approach advocates the importance of having as many staff as possible involved in teaching Christian Studies. This is often done for ease of timetabling and allows administration to ‘top up’ a teachers’ load if it is short of 2 or 3 lessons. (*Christian Studies Issues* paper)
* Availability of qualified staff who have theological and philosophical background, biblical knowledge, and an understanding of pedagogy and methodology appropriate for Christian Studies (*Christian Studies Issues* paper)
* Lack of intellectual challenge when a ministry approach is applied to the teaching of Christian Studies.
* Too much overlap with what Christian students in the classes have already received (or will cover) in Sunday School, church, confirmation and/or youth group.
* Lack of specifically qualified teachers with training in both the teaching area and pedagogy (eg, too many clergy and non-teaching staff taking the subject)
* The experience of many students that they are being ‘preached’ to and urged to hold certain correct views.
* Lack of support or taking seriously of Christian Studies by school leadership in terms of timetabling and staffing.

It is to be noted that Christian Studies as a curriculum offering faces significant challenges not experienced by other curriculum areas. Firstly CS is seen as a subject superfluous to the requirements of university entrance or professional preparation for most career paths. Students consider it as a subject that ‘doesn’t count’. At the same time, in wider Australian society Christianity has become increasingly viewed as irrelevant at best and at worst the cause of the world’s greatest conflicts. This creates real challenges for even the best Christian Studies programmes and is to be recognised as part of the wider context in which Christian Studies operates.

# Summary of key findings

Three distinct groups were surveyed, and key findings are identified from each group. The findings from the three distinct surveys, taken together, paint a fuller view of what is actually happening in senior level Christian Studies across our schools.

## 1. Principals and heads of Christian Studies

The current study received very broad support from Lutheran secondary school principals who, as a group, were open and passionate in their views on Christian Studies and generous in allowing access to their CS teaching staff and students. Heads of Christian Studies were also supportive and open, even about areas where their own programs were struggling. Without this broad support and cooperation from principals and heads of Christian Studies, the present survey would not have been able to gain the level of insight into current Christian Studies strengths and weaknesses that it did.

The survey of principals and heads of Christian Studies reveals that the diversity of approaches by principals to CS indicated in the 2002 Christian Studies audit still exists. Of 45 respondents in this survey, there was significant diversity in several areas. While 17 said the main criterion for selecting Christian Studies teachers was their qualifications, another twelve said it was determined by who was available. While nearly half (21) said the subject at year 12 was timetabled for 90 minutes each week, nine gave it two hours, another eight one hour, and seven only 45 minutes per week. The responses for year 11 Christian Studies were similar, with an increase in those giving the subject two hours or more (13), and a decrease in those giving the subject 45 minutes (4). Most said the CSCF was either the basis for planning units of work or provided the framework in which the school’s programs were developed. Only seven said the CSCF was not used at the senior level or was used in different ways, depending on the teacher. What is interesting is that whereas 82% of principals and heads of Christian Studies believe the CSCF is used as the basis of the Christian Studies curriculum, only 59% of senior level Christian Studies teachers from these same schools felt that was the case. This may well reflect, in part, different understandings by principals and head of CS, as compared to CS teachers, of what is means to use CSCF as the basis of the curriculum.

It is also significant that of those surveyed regarding their perception of the primary purpose or purposes of Christian Studies the number one response was to help students see the relevance of Christianity for life today (98%), and the second most common response was to provide spiritual experiences (64%). These were the only two responses to get more than a 50% affirmation rate from principals and CS heads. This would indicate a strong tendency to view Christian Studies not so much as part of the educational program of the school, but as a part of its ministry, in a similar category to chaplaincy services and chapel. While interviews with select principals and heads of CS indicate this perspective is the result of a commendable and encouraging ongoing commitment to the promotion of the gospel, it appears that it may also have unintended consequences. For instance, the information gained from qualitative data that was gathered suggested many principals and heads of CS found it difficult to articulate the role and function of CS within the wider educational program of the school, as opposed to its place in the ministry and spirituality of the school. We also observed a correspondence between the ability of the principals and CS heads to articulate the role of the CS within the academic program of the school and the satisfaction levels of Year 11 and 12 students. The schools in which either the principal or head of CS (or both) were able to clearly articulate the role and place of CS within the educational program of the school had significantly higher levels of student satisfaction than those schools where this was not the case.

*‘Christian Studies requires the most highly qualified teachers as they need to be able to cope with challenging theological questions. Christian Studies is a discipline of study. To create meaning you need a framework and Christian Studies helps students make meaning. …. It is part of our curriculum in terms of the development of the capacities of students.’ [principal’s comment]*

Evidence from selected interviews suggests that the strong commitment to the spread of the gospel may play a role in the tendency to select CS teachers with a very strong passion for the Bible and personal faith but who otherwise have a limited appreciation for the purpose and practice of Christian Studies as described in the CSCF.

There is little indication of consistency across the Lutheran system as to how teachers are chosen for these subjects, what curriculum is used, how the subjects are timetabled, their place within the overall school curriculum, etc. While there is general support for Christian Studies and appreciation of staff and curriculum resources, the most striking finding from the leader’s survey is the lack of consistency in so many key areas across Lutheran secondary schools in the area of Christian Studies. While many schools enjoy and even seem to thrive on the advantages of doing Christian Studies in their own way, others struggle with the direction and shape Christian Studies should take. The lack of consistency may indicate some underlying system wide issues that need to be addressed. These would include the benefits of a more consistent approach across schools, consistent standards for teachers’ qualifications and learning outcomes for students, consistency in approach to timetabling, and consistency in the ways in which the CSCF is used to support the CS program.

The ability to provide appropriate curriculum resources and PD is made more challenging when there is such great diversity in the approach to Christian Studies. Timetabling and staff selection policies in several schools have led to perceptions that Christian Studies is a low priority subject which gets the ‘leftover’ timeslots and the teachers who do not yet have a full teaching load. Overall, the support indicated for Christian Studies by teachers and heads of Christian Studies was strongly positive. As to future directions for senior level Christian Studies one principal stated ‘I would like to see the profile of Christian Studies raised both in the minds of students and in the minds of teachers so that it is considered core to our function as a Christian school.’

## 2. Christian Studies teachers

The survey of Christian Studies teachers at the senior secondary level had 34 responses. The level of diversity as to how Christian Studies (CS) was offered and timetabled that was seen in the leaders’ survey was confirmed by the teachers. Like the principals and heads, the teachers felt they had a clear idea of what Christian Studies was about. All respondents agreed that one of the primary purposes of senior secondary CS was ‘to challenge young people’s thinking and help them see the relevance of Christianity for life today.’ As for the motivation of the teachers, this varied considerably. Some felt a call to teach Christian Studies, others were motivated to share their faith, others wanted to see students better educated about religion in general and Christianity in particular, others were concerned to promote spirituality, some wanted to see a balance between academic and other life issues, and others still wanted to prepare students for life.

Of the 34 teachers who responded to the survey, 21 felt very well qualified to teach the subject and 13 felt adequately qualified. None felt they were not well prepared or in need of further training. When asked to identify their main needs as a senior Christian Studies teacher the responses were mixed. The majority listed such things as; developing their knowledge of the subject, better curriculum resources, opportunities to collaborate in units with other Christian Studies teachers, and better timetabling. Twenty of the 34 teachers said they used the CSCF in years 11 and 12. The majority, 29 of 34, felt Christian Studies was assessed in similar ways to that of other learning areas.

One of the most striking features of the teachers’ results has to do with their assessment of the student valuation of the subject. Thirteen felt that, as a whole, their students were engaged and 16 felt their students were reasonably engaged. Only four felt the students were only somewhat engaged or actively disengaged. The teachers were also positive about how well Christian Studies helped their students think deeply about important life questions with 14 of the 18 answering ‘very well’, 14 ‘mostly well’ and six ‘sometimes’. None answered not well or not at all. These responses are significant because they are in striking contrast to the responses of the student participants (who were drawn from the same schools). Even taking into account the lack of enthusiasm one might expect from students of that age about anything academic, the variance is significant enough to suggest that Christian Studies teachers may be overly optimistic about the success they are having with their CS students. This result was also borne out in the school visits conducted in which there was notably more optimism on the part of teachers than of students regarding the impact and valuation of CS classes.

*‘It’s not her fault that she can’t deal with the questions that we have. She just doesn’t have the* *knowledge or experience to explore these questions with us.’ [student comment]*

*We want stuff that is respectful of our intellect. [student comment]*

## 3. Year 11 and 12 Christian Studies students

The student portion of this survey, to which we had just over 440 responses for the electronic survey, represents arguably the most significant data gathered in this current study.

An important finding is that the split between those students identifying themselves as Christians and those identifying as non-Christian was nearly even with 47% Christian to 53% non-Christian. It should be noted, however, that when the researchers made site visits to several schools and passed out the same surveys to an additional 315 students, including all students within each class visited, only 39% identified as Christian. This may indicate that of those students who volunteered to complete the online survey, there was a greater tendency for Christian students to participate. Anecdotal evidence and information from individual schools suggests the 39% figure for the number of Christian students in years 11 and 12 is more realistic.

Interestingly, only 20% of those self-identifying as Christian said they attend worship at a local church. The fact that more than half of year 11 and 12 Christian Studies students do not identify as Christian is by itself extraordinarily significant for Christian Studies as it indicates a majority of the students for whom the CS curriculum is designed do not consider themselves Christian, and of those who do, the majority are not active in a congregation. Clearly, if a Christian Studies teacher had a class of all Christian or all non-Christian students, this would be reflected in content, teaching strategies, assessment, etc. The question that needs to be asked is what advice, structure, resources, etc, are being provided to our senior Christian Studies teachers to provide a differentiated curriculum for students with such diverse backgrounds.

As to the question of the general satisfaction levels of the students regarding CS, the survey indicates that there is still much work to be done. Of those surveyed, 32% indicated Christian Studies was their least favourite subject, and many, both Christian and non-Christian, struggled to see the relevance of Christian Studies. 61% felt that Christian Studies had not been helpful in their spiritual journey, and 44% believed Christian Studies had not helped them explore theological and ethical questions. 53% thought that it was a ‘bludge’ subject and only 32% felt that Christian Studies dealt with topics that interested them. It should be noted that this is in stark contrast to how most Christian Studies teachers at the year 11 and 12 levels felt the subject was being received by students.

When asked about the best thing about Christian Studies the following responses were given:

* the largest group, 64, said learning about other religions, cultures and worldviews,
* 60 said the debates, discussions, and the opportunity to express themselves,
* another 26 said ethics and current issues,
* 54 said free time, study time, time to sleep, relax or meditate,
* 37 said ‘the teacher’,
* 32 said watching movies,
* 28 said ‘nothing’,
* 20 said friendship or fellowship,
* 13 referred to self-reflection or development, and,
* 12 talked about developing their Christian faith.

When asked what they found most difficult about Christian Studies the largest cluster of responses (77) referred to the workload and assessments. The second largest cluster (76) was ‘nothing’ or ‘not much’. The third biggest cluster of responses (47) referred to the debates/discussions that occur in class (17), the confronting questions/topics/activities that are involved (15), and the awkwardness they feel in disclosing their opinions in front of others (15). The reason for this may be clarified by those students (12) who referred to trying to cope with the attitudes of other students, peer pressure and trying to fit in. The next largest cluster of responses (45) was those who said it was ‘boring’, and that they lacked interest, motivation or concentration. 41 said ‘it is a waste of time’ which could otherwise be spent on ‘other more important subjects.’ Another large cluster (30) referred to their difficulty in comprehending the content.

As for changes they would make, most answered ‘nothing’, but of those with specific suggestions, more time on other religions, more about Christian faith, more time on ethics, lightening the workload and assessments, more discussions, more modern and relevant topics, more enjoyable and interactive lessons and better movies, and decreasing lessons or making the subject optional were recurrent themes. In response to the question about what they would change about the content or teaching in Christian Studies comments such as the following from Christian and non-Christian students were significant:

* ‘to learn the religion interactively with a teacher and peers – not always reading from a textbook or watching a video’
* ‘being able to research your own interest in theology’.
* ‘I would change the teaching style to have more interaction, for example more hands on activities.’
* ‘To make it more interesting and appealing to those who aren’t Christian. Maybe change the way to teach the subject and instead of forcing the whole religion thing on the students who do not believe leading them into discovering and finding the way for their own. Encouraging to make their own decisions.’

When we separated the responses of the students who identified as Christian from those who said they were not Christian, we found that the negative perceptions were in all but one case reduced among the Christian respondents, though only marginally in most areas. For instance:

* 50% of Christian students found CS helpful in their spiritual journey (compared to 39% overall),
* 61% thought it helped them explore their theological and ethical questions (compared to 56% overall),
* 46% thought it was a bludge subject (compared to 53% overall),
* 33% said CS explored topics of interest to them (compared to 32% of students overall!).

The biggest distinction detected between Christian and non-Christian students was that 19% of Christian students said it was their least favourite subject, compared to 37% of non-Christian students. Also, the reasons for the dislike of Christian Studies tended to vary between the two groups. Christian students were just as likely to find the subject pointless and burdensome in the comments they made, and several complained that it did not explore Christian faith or teaching deeply enough. Several Christian students found the attitudes and behaviour of some other students and some discussion topics difficult to deal with. The non-Christian students tended to complain that not enough time was spent on other religions (though this complaint also occurred among the Christian students), that there was often an assumption that everyone in the class was Christian, that the teacher tended to ‘preach’ at them, and that some topics were difficult or confronting.

It is also interesting to note that of the 315 students surveyed across five schools selected for site visits 35% found CS helpful while 59% said it was unhelpful. This is a worse acceptance rate of Christian Studies than found in the electronic surveys and may well reflect that all students in select CS classes in these schools were surveyed, avoiding the possibility of a degree of self-selection among the students who participated in the electronic survey favouring those who had a greater appreciation of Christian Studies. Hence, it may also better represent the true level of dissatisfaction among all students.

It is apparent that the present situation in Lutheran schools may actually put Christian students at risk in a number of ways. They are often forced to identify with a curriculum and its content which may be unpopular or inaccessible to the majority of their classmates. They may be asked to cover material that they already know from home or from church. And they are often forced to cover material at a very basic level for the sake of the majority of the class, which reinforces the impression that Christian Studies is boring and not challenging, even for Christian students. Our group interviews with students uncovered a general feeling of discomfort and awkwardness that Christian students consistently experienced in Christian Studies within an environment where they nearly always saw themselves as a minority.

*‘As a Christian I just feel overwhelmed when they talk about my faith like that. ‘*

*‘I just tune out when just about Jesus.’ [student comments]*

# School site visits in 2014

In the latter half of 2014 the researchers visited five schools, two in Queensland, two in SA, and one in the LEVNT region. A day was spent at each school interviewing the principal, head of Christian Studies, Christian Studies teachers, and year 11 and 12 Christian Studies students. The schools visited were selected in consultation with regional leadership. The selection was not random as several (though not all) were chosen on the basis of the perception that the school was doing innovative work in the area of Christian Studies and that the program was having some success. The purpose of the visits was to firstly explore what approach to Christian Studies and what innovations (if any) were being employed at the school. Secondly, it was to compare the satisfaction levels of students in these schools with the results from around Australia through surveying and meeting with students in small groups. The data gained during these visits was not incorporated into the data gathered in the electronic surveys. The fact that a small number students may have participated twice if this data had been incorporated was of concern. The greater concern was that adding in the significant data gathered from five schools selected in part non-randomly would have skewed the overall results.

In all the schools visited we discovered dedicated and innovative staff. Several programs observed are worthy of consideration by other schools within the Lutheran education system. Two of the schools visited produced survey results consistently and significantly above the national average. This demonstrates how difficult the task of running a CS program is in the present climate. It would also seem to be an indication that innovative programs, regardless how well received, have little impact on the overall student population if they are accessed by only a small number of students.

The two schools visited which produced student survey results well above the national average for Lutheran secondary schools had some points in common that were not shared consistently by other schools. We observed that in these schools, in no particular order: (1) that CS teaching staff were all specialists in CS with specific qualifications and training, (2) that the bulk of the CS teaching load was shouldered by a small number of highly motivated and specialised teachers, (3) that there was an intentional focus on academic rigour (not to be confused with tests and demanding assignments) and clear content and learning outcomes, and (4) there was good communication and general unity of purpose between the principal, the head of CS, the key CS teachers and the chaplains and/or school pastors. That is to say, there was a clear intention to deliver a CS program to a certain standard and that all key teaching and educational leadership staff were on side with this program.

Nothing else stood out about the schools with the high student scores. In fact, surprisingly, some of the most exciting and innovative programs that we found were actually being conducted in the other schools visited. While these programs received very good student feedback, they were accessed by a small percentage of total students, and hence did not significantly impact on overall results.

Innovative programs discovered:

* Passion play project: One school produces an annual passion play for the school community performed by senior students who choose to be involved. Each year’s play is different as students study the gospels, develop their interpretation, then present the play to various parts of the school and community in the lead up to Easter.
* CS unit on Islam conducted on Facebook: One teacher shared how an entire semester of a CS class was conducted using Facebook. All assignments, interaction with other students, and teacher comment occurred on Facebook. The level of participation and quality of reflection was greatly increased.
* A defined centre/space for Christian Studies faculty and chaplaincy staff. The Christian Studies/Ministry centre not only contained key staff offices, but also spaces where students could come to talk to staff about issues of significance and simply have some time out. It was a visible sign of the importance of Christian Studies and Christian ministry on the campus.
* Offering state board examined religious education subjects in years 11 and 12. Several schools gave students the option of doing a subject that counted for year 11 or 12 credit through state board examination. While this was more prevalent in year 11, a minority of students chose this option in year 12. The interviews with students in these classes indicated a consistent and very high level of satisfaction. While not suitable for all students, it did seem to provide an option for a small group who wanted to get more out of Christian Studies, and who otherwise would likely have been among those in the mainstream classes expressing dissatisfaction.
* Offering a Cert III in Christian Ministry and Theology via the Vetamorphosis or similar ministry focused program such as Kickstart 3D. Two schools offered Cert III programs with a ministry focus. While the courses were designed for, and appeared to attract, only active Christian students in relatively small numbers, the reports of those in these programs were glowing. The students learned much about practical faith and ministry, were energised by their work, and were happy not to be in the mainstream CS option as the ‘lone’ active Christian.
* Providing electives taught by specialists in the various offerings. In two schools mini-subjects were offered and students had a choice as to which elective they attended. While the offerings varied in popularity and impact, what all students seemed to appreciate was the fact that they had choice about what option to attend.
* Integration of classroom content with excursions (eg, with other religions) or special guests. Several schools organised regular excursions or guest visits, usually connected to the study of other religions. They were always well received as being very authentic and informative.

**Recurrent themes from the twelve focus groups conducted in five separate secondary schools**

* Students appreciate well prepared, qualified and knowledgeable teachers.
* Students appreciate teachers who allow them to discuss and disagree with the perceived official school or church position.
* Students appreciate academic rigour, but not extra out of class workload at year 11 and 12 levels. They did not generally mind assessment if it was challenging and relevant.
* Students value the opportunity for discussions of ethics, world religions and philosophy that occurs beginning in year 11 – though many expressed the wish that this shift in focus and approach had occurred earlier in their schooling.
* Students suggested the shift in focus from core biblical and theological teaching to world religions, ethical issues, decision-making, identity issues, etc, should begin earlier than year 11.
* Students (both Christian and non-Christian) were highly critical of CS programs that they perceived to be primarily about faith formation.
* Students know when timetabling, room designation and teacher selection indicate that CS is a low priority.
* Students were able to clearly articulate the strengths and weaknesses of Christian Studies in their schools and wondered why no-one asks them what they think about the program.
* Christian students often find the presentation of the faith too basic and embarrassing and find that it makes it difficult in the classroom to self-identify as a Christian.
* Non-Christian students (who are the majority in our year 11 and 12 cohorts) generally accept that there will be an emphasis of Christianity, but would like more ethics and world religions and more freedom to disagree without feeling they are being ‘preached at’.
* There is widespread frustration (especially in year 12) that students have to do what they often see as a ‘bludge’ subject when they could better spend their time preparing for subjects that actually ‘count’.
* Students appreciated choice in what they discussed or in having options in CS whenever this was available. Similarly, those students who had had no scope for choice were highly critical of a one size fits all approach whereas their other subject areas tended to offer options.

*Apathy is the greatest challenge. This is mandated when they get a lot more choice in other subjects. [teacher comment]*

* Students generally appreciated the point and value of Christian Studies, even those who were not Christian, as long as they could see that it was helping them to think deeply about values and complex issues.

*I love it when it makes my brain hurt. [student comment]*

# Recommendations for senior Christian Studies in Lutheran schools

There has been long discussion about what to do with Christian Studies (Religious Education) within all faith-based school systems. Lutheran schools have been no exception. The data from the recent LEA study as well as other sources indicate the following:

* Christian Studies is a vital part of our Lutheran schools’ culture and identity
* The leadership of our Lutheran schools is committed to Christian Studies
* We have an adequate supply of committed and enthusiastic CS teachers
* A great diversity of approaches to timetabling, curriculum, selection criteria for CS teachers, testing, etc, is in evidence at the secondary level.
* Christian Studies in our secondary schools is the least popular of all subjects and has been for many years
* Christian Studies is often seen by students as not academically or intellectually challenging
* Christian Studies is seen as an easy subject or a ‘bludge’ subject by students
* Christian Studies is not seen as relevant to students’ future lives and vocations
* The extent of the dissatisfaction with CS among students seems to be often underestimated by CS teachers.

Given this situation, it is unlikely that anything less than a comprehensive and multi-levelled approach to addressing the issue of Christian Studies (especially at the senior secondary level) will produce significant improvement. The following are not meant to correspond to every key finding of the study, but are concrete recommendations arising out of those findings which would not only seem to merit action, but which are also most likely to produce substantial and positive improvement.

**Key recommendations for consideration**

1. **That a concerted effort be made to work with principals regarding an agreed common understanding of the place of CS in the school curricula and the implementation of measures needed to improve CS programs.**

*Comments*: Any significant changes to the CS programs in Lutheran schools are unlikely to succeed without the understanding and active support of secondary principals. Our study suggests that principals make a significant difference in their school’s CS program, with schools whose principals had a clear vision and understanding of the role of CS as part of the school’s academic program and who provided corresponding care in the selection and support of key CS staff (including heads of CS) showing significantly higher than average results in the student surveys.

1. **Shift existing curriculum focus toward the more rigorous goals of the CSCF (similar also to the Religion and Values Education approach), with significant focus on ethics, philosophy, world religions, history of Christianity, basic beliefs, faith and science, spirituality and study of the Bible as literature.**

*Comments*: It is not the school’s task to replace or replicate Sunday school, confirmation or youth groups. Congregations must be encouraged to take up these tasks with renewed vigour. Schools should teach CS/RE with more focus on religious history and knowledge, values through philosophy and ethics, biblical literacy based upon the Bible as literature and not simply as a devotional book. Significant arguments and advancements have been made in this area through the Dialogue Australasia Network (DAN). CS needs to become a solid academic subject area on a par with other subject areas in our schools. The CSCF already points in this direction but needs to be more intentional about this and expanded in some areas. The data from hundreds of Lutheran senior secondary students also strongly supports this direction, along with the fact that among selected schools visited, those with a strong academic or RAVE type approach achieved the highest level of student satisfaction. A critical component of making this shift in thinking will involve working closely with principals and heads of CS as the data indicates that a majority currently tend to see CS more as a part of the spirituality and ministry of the school than of its academic program. If there is no significant shift in this thinking in senior leadership, then other efforts in this direction are unlikely to produce significant change.

1. **That all CS teachers be required to have a set level of theological and philosophical qualification in Christian Studies or RAVE corresponding to the teaching requirements for other areas of study, such as English, Maths or History.**

*Comments*: While there is little doubt we have many highly committed and motivated teachers in our CS program, few are qualified to the same level in either CS or RAVE as they would be for their other teaching areas. If we expect students to take CS seriously and the teachers to deliver it in a consistent and competent manner, this must be insisted upon. Government regulatory bodies will never make this a requirement for us, fearing accusations of not honouring a perceived commitment to the separation of church and state. This leaves CS/RE as the only teaching field in most schools with no standard requirements for teaching. It is not enough for teachers to love Jesus (though this is indeed a good thing!). This does not guarantee that they have specific knowledge of philosophy, church history, the Bible as literature, world religions, etc. Nor does it mean they have knowledge of the pedagogical approaches specific to this teaching area. It is also not good enough to claim that we would not be able to get any teachers if such expectations (ie, equivalent of six undergraduate units in RAVE as a minimum requirement for secondary CS teachers) were enforced. The requirement has not produced shortages or similar voiced concerns for any other teaching area. Why single out CS as second rate?

1. **That all CS teachers be expected to have an understanding and appreciation of the Lutheran theological tradition.**

*Comments***:** While staffing the CS programs of Lutheran schools with Lutheran teachers is a good ideal, it is likely in many situations not achievable in practice. It is, however, a reasonable expectation that CS teachers (and especially CS heads) have a solid understanding of and appreciation for Lutheran theology and the Lutheran tradition.

1. **That Lutheran schools begin the interactive, ethics, issues and world religions focus that is generally now found beginning in year 11 earlier, as is also supported by the current CSCF.**

*Comments*: In focus group interviews with students a recurrent theme, expressed often as a plea, was that the kind of material covered and the approach taken in year 11 should occur in earlier year levels. The students felt that CS through year 8 was sufficient to focus on basic biblical and doctrinal content and that by year 9 they were ready for the kind of exploration and critical engagement and discussion that most reported only experiencing in year 11. By year 11 many felt their attitudes to CS had soured and that the opportunity had been largely missed.

1. **That senior secondary CS teachers receive specific training/mentoring in how to approach the sensitive topics of religion, ethics and values in a way that shows respect to all students (including those with very different views to the teacher) while still being able to make the key points that need to be made.**

*Comments*: Once more, one of the biggest issues to arise out of focus group interviews with students was the perception that in many cases they were being preached at, they were not allowed to disagree, and they were being treated as young children now needed to accept the official view. This approach, in the view of the students, almost always led to the opposite result the teacher intended. The interviewers were particularly concerned that in many cases the teachers of the students who were making these points had just articulated to us very clearly their belief that their classroom was open for discussion, they did not preach at the students, and all were treated as young adults. The concern is that many teachers, given the difficulty of the topics covered and the depth of their own personal views, are not aware of how they actually are coming across and the detrimental impact it is having on their students’ learning outcomes and perceptions of the Christian faith. A program to raise awareness of this problem to demonstrate positive and less positive ways of communicating in class or handling disagreement, the opportunity for mentoring and feedback based on classroom observations, etc, could all help make good and well-intentioned CS teachers great and highly effective CS teachers.

1. **Work with Australian Lutheran College (or another partner higher education provider) to offer a Cert 4, GradCert, and GradDip in Religion and Values Education (or similar program) for leaders and teachers, in accordance with industry guidelines, and make these subjects available through Moodle and intensives and other flexible means.**

*Comments*: While ALC should not be expected to carry the entire load in this area (other providers should be identified and promoted as options) we cannot introduce a clear training requirement for CS without providing a tertiary training program. The GradDip and GradCert offerings would cater well for teachers from middle school to senior secondary level who are already certified teachers and could add CS/RE/RAVE as a teaching area through the addition of a graduate award. Scholarships could be offered to assist with the uptake. For those enrolled in undergraduate teaching programs, these subjects through ALC or similar subjects through other institutions, could be offered at the degree level to form part of the BA or BA/BEd.

1. **Introduction of learning and teaching methods and testing equivalent to other fields of study, without making senior level CS an additional burden to an already intense academic load.**

*Comments*: There is little reason for students (or teachers) to take seriously a subject area that is not rigorous and assessed or that does not count toward their year 11 and 12 results. Year 11 and 12 students should have the opportunity to sit exams, and a year 12 RAVE major project is required. Few would continue to see CS was a ‘bludge’ subject with no standards in which they were not challenged and did not learn anything.

1. **CS curriculum resources need to be refreshed, keeping the best of current resources, and sourcing or creating new resources to support the content and intentions of the CSCF.**

*Comments*: Teachers must be provided with plenty of quality resources similar to that provided in other key teaching areas and which will cater for areas like philosophy, church history or the Bible as literature which may not have been previously emphasised in the curriculum. We must also encourage best teaching practice. Studies show that group work, discussions, projects, excursions and well taught topics all work well in CS. Movies (other than short clips or the very occasional film) are seen as a ‘bludge’ and space filler. Approaches that look or sound like preaching and expects students to share the teacher’s point of view have also been shown to be counter-productive.

1. **Innovative and successful CS programs (large and small scale) within the Lutheran system be collected and shared as a system wide resource.**

*Comments***:** While many areas needed improvement have been identified in the study, so also were a number of innovative and successful approaches ranging from ideas for providing content options for students, innovative use of social media, major projects, etc. An effort to identify and collect all such programs and ideas currently being used in Lutheran secondary schools will not only reinforce the fact that we are doing a number of things quite well, but will serve as a resource for all schools as the effort is made to reinvigorate CS studies**.**

1. **The LCA, working under the direction of the College of Bishops, could consider beginning a program to recover and renew the areas of Sunday School, confirmation and youth groups within its congregations to do the kind of basic Christian and spiritual work that the schools cannot and should not be doing in their CS classes.**

*Comments*: Observers of the congregational and school scenes have long noted a correlation in the decline of some aspects of children’s and youth ministries with the rise of Lutheran schools. It is difficult to attract children to a Sunday School program or adolescents to confirmation if they feel they have covered all this in school. There is also a temptation for some congregations to simply delegate this responsibility to the school. This is healthy for neither the school nor the congregation and any shift in focus in the CS program of Lutheran schools should be coordinated with a vigorous program within congregations to reclaim these vital areas of ministry and teaching.

# Appendix

## Basic Data, Part One: Survey of principals and heads of Christian Studies

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| **How is Christian Studies structured in year 11 at your school?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| As a state board assessed subject | 40.0% | 18 |
| A timetabled learning area | 55.6% | 25 |
| Retreat day/s offered during the year | 0.0% | 0 |
| Seminars | 2.2% | 1 |
| As a VET Certificate 3 course\* | 0.0% | 0 |
| Discussion based sessions | 2.2% | 1 |
| Other | 0.0% | 0 |
| Other (please describe) | 8 |

\* Four respondents indicated that they also offered a VET level Cert III course, but this was not the primary structure for the teaching of Christian Studies in year 11 in their school.

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| **How is Christian Studies structured in year 12 at your school?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| A timetabled learning area | 66.7% | 30 |
| Retreat day/s offered during the year | 4.4% | 2 |
| Seminars | 4.4% | 2 |
| As a VET Certificate 3 course\* | 0.0% | 0 |
| As a state board assessed subject | 20.0% | 9 |
| Discussion based sessions | 4.4% | 2 |
| Other | 0.0% | 0 |
| Other (please describe) | 8 |

\*One respondent indicated that year 12 Christian Studies can also be done as a VET course at their school.

|  |
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| **In your view what is the primary purpose of Christian Studies in years 11 and 12? Tick all that apply** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| To provide respite from the stresses and pressures of senior secondary learning | 8.9% | 4 |
| To challenge young people’s thinking and help them see the relevance of Christianity for life today | 97.8% | 44 |
| To provide a comprehensive study of contemporary theological issues | 40.0% | 18 |
| To be assessed as a state curriculum authority subject and contribute to the year 12 score | 24.4% | 11 |
| To provide spiritual experiences that engage the emotions of students | 64.4% | 29 |
| To provide a range of Bible studies | 26.7% | 12 |
| To expose them to a range of speakers who share information on a range of topics connected to Christianity | 40.0% | 18 |
| Other | 8.9% | 4 |
| Other (please specify) | 8 |

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| **How much time each week is timetabled for Christian Studies in year 11?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| <30 mins | 0.0% | 0 |
| 30 mins | 0.0% | 0 |
| 45 mins | 8.9% | 4 |
| 60 mins | 15.6% | 7 |
| 90 mins | 46.7% | 21 |
| 120 mins | 20.0% | 9 |
| > 120 mins | 8.9% | 4 |

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| **How much time each week is timetabled for Christian Studies in year 12?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| <30 mins | 0.0% | 0 |
| 30 mins | 0.0% | 0 |
| 45 mins | 15.6% | 7 |
| 60 mins | 17.8% | 8 |
| 90 mins | 46.7% | 21 |
| 120 mins | 17.8% | 8 |
| > 120 mins | 2.2% | 1 |

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| **How are Christian Studies teachers selected for years 11 and 12?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Volunteer or express interest | 4.4% | 2 |
| Apply and go through a selection process | 4.4% | 2 |
| Determined by availability in the timetable | 26.7% | 12 |
| Nominated by Christian Studies leader | 17.8% | 8 |
| Selected on the basis of qualifications | 37.8% | 17 |
| Other | 8.9% | 4 |
| Other (please specify) | 11 |

Eight respondents who specified other indicated that a combination of the above options are used and some felt the survey should have allowed them to choose more than one response. Two were unsure and one specified that deputy principals and confident presenters of faith were selected for Christian Studies in years 10-12.

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| **How is the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework used at your school in year 11?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Used as the basis for planning the units of work | 37.8% | 17 |
| Provides a framework to which school developed programs are aligned | 44.4% | 20 |
| Is not used in the senior years | 11.1% | 5 |
| Is used in different ways by different teachers | 4.4% | 2 |
| Other | 2.2% | 1 |
| Other (please specify) | 2 |

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| --- |
| **How is the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework used at your school in year 12?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Used as the basis for planning the units of work | 33.3% | 15 |
| Provides a framework to which school developed programs are aligned | 37.8% | 17 |
| Is not used in the senior years | 17.8% | 8 |
| Is used in different ways by different teachers | 4.4% | 2 |
| Other | 6.7% | 3 |
| Other (please specify) | 4 |

|  |
| --- |
| **How does your budget for Christian Studies in years 11 and 12 compare with the budget for other learning areas?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| More than other subjects | 0.0% | 0 |
| Similar to other subjects | 48.9% | 22 |
| Less than other subjects | 51.1% | 23 |
| Optional comment | 11 |

|  |
| --- |
| **What professional learning opportunities that you are aware of have been provided for years 11 and 12 Christian Studies teachers in the last two years?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Equip | 81.8% | 36 |
| Dialogue Australasia workshops | 27.3% | 12 |
| Regional office offerings | 56.8% | 25 |
| Other | 13.6% | 6 |
| Other (please specify/optional comment) | 8 |

|  |
| --- |
| **How does it compare with professional learning offered to teachers in other subjects?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| More than other subjects | 8.9% | 4 |
| Similar to other subjects | 55.6% | 25 |
| Less than other subjects | 35.6% | 16 |

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| **What direction would you like to see year 11 and 12 Christian Studies take in the future?** |
| * Make the content more engaging and relevant to the students. Increase the Christian content but make it engaging & relevant rather than dry and boring. Currently the course is about how to deal with issues in our daily life but the students don't seem to really care and see Christian Studies as a waste of time so they don't take it seriously. It is also not assessed so students don't care how little effort they put into it.
 |
| * I believe we need to present a Christian based framework for them for their future incorporating the Christian background presented in earlier years.
 |
| * More explicit emphasis on engaging pedagogy - through critical and reflective thinking habits.
 |
| * Small group discussion based, perhaps with a service component
 |
| * A more student focused element. Working from current knowledge. Perhaps some extra studies in philosophy that allows for the deeper thinking necessary. I would like to see a very strong focus on ethics and human values.
 |
| * We have a good program at our school and I don't think it needs a great deal of work.
 |
| * It must be relevant, current and meet the needs of the students. Open questions with student leading the learning and teacher facilitating the process.
 |
| * Inclusion of Cert 3 in Ministry as part of the Yr 11/12 curriculum as an additional option for students alongside school-based CS which would be the default option for students not choosing VCE "Texts and Traditions" or Cert 3 in Ministry
 |
| * The main challenge for a Lutheran School is providing an 11 & 12 CS program that is engaging and relevant to the circumstances of that particular school. Probably the question should be: Can a discreet list of 'faith challenging' or 'faith developing' requirements / criteria in the Lutheran tradition be developed which allows schools the flexibility to deliver an 11 & 12 course suitable to their context? In the opinion of the wise, do we already have this?
 |
| * Still working it out
 |
| * A more fun and ranged subject
 |
| * Hopefully, in future Christian Studies would be more about discussion than the assignments because it is interesting to see people’s opinions about certain issues.
 |
| * Continuation of good practice, utilizing student feedback yet also exposing them to the 'big questions' in life.
 |
| * Needs to maintain a high profile. Our C/S coordinator and School Pastor are exploring new ways to re-focus in these year levels. This is also linked to a new timetable model
 |
| * LEA to continue to provide resources
 |
| * I teach contemporary Ethics and select relevant issues as well as set basic ethical standards
 |
| * Maintain relevance and be accredited by the State.
 |
| * No change
 |
| * We are reviewing this year the format of year 12 in terms of offerings.
 |
| * We would like to be able to offer a board registered alternative as well as the current structure
 |
| * Stronger support for teachers via suggested resources, professional development, recommended texts, etc.
 |
| * This is a critical time for our students and the opportunity to explore their understandings in a safe environment will determine how the spirit can work in their lives.
 |
| * I would like CS to continue in the manner we currently do. I am very happy with learning outcomes.
 |
| * Same as currently offered
 |
| * I wish Christian Studies was relevant to the students who are accessing it. It should consider the context of the school and the students’ needs. Christian Studies should also offer an understanding of other worldviews as the students will exist in a world that is becoming more and more global in terms of interactions via social media and travelling.
 |
| * I would like to see the profile of CS raised both in the minds of students and in the minds of teachers so that it is considered as core to our function as a Christian school
 |
| * Continue to provide a experience that demonstrates how Christianity can be relevant in the lives of young people
 |
| * That the programs continue to engage students and encourage them to develop an appreciation for the influence that Christianity, and other religions, have in Australian society and the Global community.
 |
| * A greater focus on spiritual well-being with a more vibrant and interactive content
 |
| * More emphasis on hermeneutics and ethics
 |
| * Not sure
 |
| * I would like to see CS principles and understandings which intersects with Religion and Ethics
 |
| * The development of engaging and relevant activities for Year 12 students
 |
| * Academic
 |
| * I would like to see the introduction of Studies of Religion as an option for students who wish to engage with the material more academically. I would like to see service learning introduced as a mandatory part of the curriculum. I would like to raise the profile of CS as a key learning area within the College
 |
| * We need to continue to provide opportunity for young people to learn Lutheran theology. Generally school is the only place that young people have the opportunity to learn this as they very few would engage in confirmation classes. Where they go to Church is often a Pentecostal church with a strong emotional worship experience but often tied to works oriented rewards or punishment theology - if you do what God wants he will reward you, if you suffer it is because you have done something wrong. Important for the richness of Lutheran theology to be shared in a meaningful way.
 |
| * More relevant and practical to where students are at and compliments their Yr 11 and 12 program.
 |
| * Year 11 and Year 12 Christian Studies should continue as an engaging Senior School unit where students can explore Christianity and its personal relevance.
 |
| * Similar to what we already do
 |
| * I would love to see us offer students the options of, either the QSA subject "Study of Religion" OR the QSA Study Area Specification (SAS) "Religion and Ethics" OR the VET course in Christian Ministry. For this to be possible, however, we would need at least four lessons per week on the timetable, rather than two... Our current internal program, based on the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework does align well with content requirements of SAS, but we get nowhere near the required hours of instruction -- even including Year 10! We used to offer Study of Religion (SOR) as an elective alongside Chemistry, History, etc but numbers were too small to continue. Then again, numbers were small because SOR clashed with other subject offerings on timetable lines. Since the Religious and Values Education (RAVE) is offered concurrently, having the options mentioned, above, would create greater opportunities for bigger class groups across options. Then again, would we have enough teachers available to take all the groups...? As you see, it all boils down to timetabling issues and a crowded curriculum.
 |
| * The great majority of students value and actively engage in the program and appreciate it's relevance to their present interests and needs and in their future lives.
 |
| * More relevance to their future lives especially those without connections to Christian Churches
 |
| * I would like Christian Studies to be devolved, to be replaced with Christian Living as a subject - less focus on theology, more on Christian life and the basis of decision-making.
 |
| * Continue in a small group Seminar format
 |
| * I have taught yr. 11 and 12 CS for 10 years. I have embraced Inquiry Learning and the use of Journaling for my students. This approach always the students to be met where they are at and then provides the opportunities to help them move forward. My classes are discussion based and student focussed. I am the facilitator of their learning and encourage the students. I think this is the direction that best models year 11 and 12 CS. The challenge is letting go and giving the students the control. This is very much based on the staff that teach these courses. We need more trained, qualified, passionate, theologically founded, and ospel-centred teachers teaching yr 11 and 12 CS. This is our future challenge.
 |

## Basic Data, Part Two: Survey of Christian Studies teachers

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| --- |
| **How is Christian Studies structured in year 11 at your school?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| As a state board assessed subject | 38.2% | 13 |
| A timetabled learning area | 52.9% | 18 |
| Retreat day/s offered during the year | 0.0% | 0 |
| Seminars | 0.0% | 0 |
| As a VET Certificate 3 course | 0.0% | 0 |
| Discussion based sessions | 2.9% | 1 |
| Other | 5.9% | 2 |
| Other (please describe) | 6 |

|  |
| --- |
| **How is Christian Studies structured in year 12 at your school?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| As a VET Certificate 3 course | 0.0% | 0 |
| A timetabled learning area | 58.8% | 20 |
| Retreat day/s offered during the year | 0.0% | 0 |
| Seminars | 5.9% | 2 |
| As a state board assessed subject | 14.7% | 5 |
| Discussion based sessions | 8.8% | 3 |
| Other | 11.8% | 4 |
| Other (please describe) | 9 |

|  |
| --- |
| **In your view what is the primary purpose of Christian Studies in year 11 and 12? Tick all that apply:** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| To provide respite from the stresses and pressures of senior secondary learning | 26.5% | 9 |
| To challenge young people’s thinking and help them see the relevance of Christianity for life today | 88.2% | 30 |
| To be assessed as a state curriculum authority subject and contribute to the year 12 score | 8.8% | 3 |
| To provide a comprehensive study of contemporary theological issues | 35.3% | 12 |
| To provide spiritual experiences that engage the emotions of students | 47.1% | 16 |
| To provide a range of Bible studies | 14.7% | 5 |
| To expose them to a range of speakers who share information on a range of topics connected to Christianity | 29.4% | 10 |
| Other | 11.8% | 4 |
| Other (please specify) | 6 |

* to challenge students with relevant topics of justice/ethics/social issues with a Christian framework
* to engage autonomy, mastery and purpose in conversation regarding spirituality
* To nurture young people in the Christian faith
* Added connection to Community Studies/Service
* A guide to embrace positive meaning in their lives.
* Reflect upon and identify personal values base (compare /contrast with Christian perspective). Challenge students to act upon their values

|  |
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| **What is your personal motivation for teaching Christian Studies?** |

|  |
| --- |
| * I believe that spiritual development is the defining factor of a person. By engaging with things that are considered deeply human experiences students develop themselves not just academically, but holistically.
 |
| * To help provide rational balance in an irrational world
 |
| * I want students to be able to view the world in a considerate and thoughtful way. To examine their own lives and beliefs and to look at a religiously colourful world through a Christian lens.
 |
| * try and provide a relevant expression of how Christianity works in our world so that others may get on board and experience the beauty of living in a relationship with God through Christ.
 |
| * I am passionate about teaching about Gods love.
 |
| * to see the growth in students
 |
| * It provides a chance to connect with students and discuss world issues.
 |
| * My background is in theology. I love the subject matter, although find it challenging for this age group particularly.
 |
| * To educate students, give understanding and enable them to make their own choice in their beliefs.
 |
| * TO HELP STUDENTS' SPIRITUAL GROWTH
 |
| * I love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ
 |
| * Enjoy the topics that are studied and meet a new group of students I would not normally teach
 |
| * An opportunity to show students the value of the Christian faith, to challenge them in their thinking about important life issues and values and to put in front of them that life is not all about what we can see and hear and measure
 |
| * To bring a concept of Christian values to students who may not otherwise be exposed to the opportunity of incorporating Biblical/Christian values into life issues.
 |
| * to evangelise and share the gospel
 |
| * Providing a knowledge of Christian teaching and thinking with the hope that faith and a relationship with Christ might be a biproduct of the learning.
 |
| * To educate students, provide a safe space for learning, exploring and developing or restoring faith. Allow students to voice their opinion, ask questions and seek guidance in a safe environment.
 |
| * To provide the students with the Christian understanding of issues.To challenge the students in their thinking on issues and to help them as they formulate their life values.To challenge them to see that there is more to life that just what we can see and hear
 |
| * Called to do so and see it as highly important
 |
| * I feel I am called by God. I have been blessed with skills and abilities that help me connect with young people in the CS classroom. I also enjoy engaging with deep issues in CS.
 |
| * Pastor
 |
| * Sharing of faith. Showing what a Christian life is all about
 |
| * I want kids to understand that having a knowledge of Christianity is important for life. Whether they profess a faith in it or not.
 |
| * To be able to share with students the relevance of the Gospel to their lives, even when they reach senior school.
 |
| * I teach Christian Studies because I believe that it is a very important subject for the spiritual growth of students,
 |
| * I have a passion for sharing the Gospel and how it has impacted my life. Therefore, my desire is to be able share the truths I have found, which in turn could assist students in their decision making throughout their lives.
 |
| * I am a passionate Christian and I want to share my faith with others and in doing so help mould/guide/shape others in their own faith journey. This would also support the school and its role in developing the faith of it students which ultimately benefits the community.
 |
| * Experience in presenting and leading discussion of contemporary issues
 |
| * I believe that students should be challenged beyond the subjects they choose to study and should have the opportunity to broaden their minds.
 |
| * I'm a pastor, the reality of the good news and God's love for people must not be forgotten - we help guide students to meaning in their life and hope for the future.
 |
| * Witness/challenge me to live out faith/challenge my faith with real life criticism/part of worship in action
 |
| * I am a Christian and a teacher. I want kids to have a balance of Christian education with academic studies.
 |
| * I believe Christian Studies is what makes Lutheran Schools unique and this subjects plays an important role in the holistic development of students.
 |
| * Love to help students wrestle with questions they have about life and faith.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **How well qualified do you believe you are for teaching Christian Studies in year 11 or 12?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Very well (I feel confident in my knowledge of theology and pedagogy) | 61.8% | 21 |
| Adequately (I have reasonable knowledge of theology and pedagogy) | 38.2% | 13 |
| Would welcome further opportunities for learning (I struggle with the theology and pedagogy at this level) | 0.0% | 0 |

|  |
| --- |
| **What is your greatest need in relation to the teaching of Christian Studies in years 11 and 12?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Developing my own knowledge so I can teach it with greater confidence and depth | 44.1% | 15 |
| Better timetabling | 20.6% | 7 |
| Better curriculum resources | 32.4% | 11 |
| Opportunities to collaborate on units with other Christian Studies teachers | 20.6% | 7 |
| Better biblical knowledge | 5.9% | 2 |
| Other | 20.6% | 7 |
| Other (please specify) | 8 |
| * Smaller class sizes in lower grades.
 |
| * Greater valuing of Christianity within our school. We compete with other worldviews and ideas that are indirectly adopted due to key staff struggling to embrace Christ as the answer to all the challenges we face in life.
 |
| * Timetabling is one component, but I think that a compulsory subject that does not contribute to VCE is always going to be a challenge in terms of engaging students.
 |
| * no specific needs; maintain and develop appropriate resources and learning as required
 |
| * The chance to actually teach it!
 |
| * Students to be more open to the subject and to treat it more seriously.
 |
| * the comparative religious and philosophical nature of the unit
 |
| * Acceptance that CS does not have to be assessed to have genuine learning outcomes.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **How is the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework used at your school in year 11?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Used as the basis for planning the units of work | 26.5% | 9 |
| Provides a framework to which school developed programs are aligned | 32.4% | 11 |
| Is not used in the senior years | 23.5% | 8 |
| Is used in different ways by different teachers | 8.8% | 3 |
| Other | 8.8% | 3 |
| Other (please specify) | 5 |
| As far as I'm aware.... |
| not sure |
| We have the SACE framework for Yr 11 |
| Use SACE framework |
| Parts are implemented into Religion and Society. |

|  |
| --- |
| **How is the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework used at your school in year 12?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Used as the basis for planning the units of work | 23.5% | 8 |
| Provides a framework to which school developed programs are aligned | 29.4% | 10 |
| Is not used in the senior years | 32.4% | 11 |
| Is used in different ways by different teachers | 11.8% | 4 |
| Other | 2.9% | 1 |
| Other (please specify) | 2 |
| Same as year 11 |
| not sure |

|  |
| --- |
| **In your opinion, how well does Christian Studies help students to think deeply about important life questions?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Very well | 41.2% | 14 |
| Mostly | 41.2% | 14 |
| Sometimes | 17.6% | 6 |
| Not well | 0.0% | 0 |
| Not at all | 0.0% | 0 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Is Christian Studies assessed in similar ways to other learning areas in your school?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Yes | 85.3% | 29 |
| No | 14.7% | 5 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment on how well assessment in Christian Studies provides feedback on student learning** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Count** |
|   | 27 |
| ***answered question*** | **27** |
| ***skipped question*** | **7** |

|  |
| --- |
| * Summative assessment pieces assist with feedback, but I'm not sure how much students take on board the feedback. They are more concerned with the relational side and that is hard to asses.
 |
| * In Year 11 it informs them how what they did stacks up with SACE
 |
| * Christian studies assessment allows students the opportunity to reflect on their own progress and ability while also providing them with opportunities to develop their skills in communication and other areas of academia.
 |
| * Reasonably - students demonstrate some very good insights in their assessment responses - such that it is encouraging to us as teachers
 |
| * Shows how well students can reflect on a topic.Can access skills of literacy.uses a range of genres.
 |
| * For 7-10, it is the same as any other subject. Not so much for 11-12, as there is no intrinsic reason for students to make their best effort in something that does not form part of their VCE score.
 |
| * As well as any other subject in year 11. Not a great deal of feedback for year 12s
 |
| * IT IS QUITE HELPFUL
 |
| * It helps students to understand and prioritize their values in order to make considered, wise decisions in life.
 |
| * Assessment is CS is approached in the same way as any other subject and a component of assessment is to provide feedback to the student so they can learn and improve.
 |
| * In the same way other subjects in our school does
 |
| * Similar to other subject frameworks
 |
| * In year 11 Christian Studies is assessed as a SACE subject so students are marked again criteria and can view rubrics to see where they are at with their learning. Year 12s don't get as much feedback.
 |
| * Well
 |
| * The SACE framework is used and feedback on student learning is broad.
 |
| * In our school in Yrs 11/12, not well. In our other year levels it's pretty good. The question is though, should it? Measurable learning activities can get in the way of engagement or changing of a student’s heart.
 |
| * High standards at this College. Where is the "of course" button for #12 below.
 |
| * Its an academic subject so assessment, like other subjects, gives important feedback as to how they are developing.
 |
| * It is treated in the same way as with other subjects, however without the same level of demand as in number of tasks.
 |
| * It does provide excellent feedback, because students receive a grade, as well as comments, and many areas of the assessment task are discussed as a class.
 |
| * I believe it covers the required areas reasonably well.
 |
| * Reasonably well but we only have 2 lessons a week and many students don't take it seriously.
 |
| * They either have in Yr 11 & 12 a research assignment, response to stimulus, a presentation, or journal each works well and specifically address elements.
 |
| * It tries very hard to and succeeds most of the time. Some units are more academic knowledge based so feedback is based on that. For the more spiritual or relationships based units it is harder to assess student learning if the material is not engaging all students. This is a result of the fact that in a classroom of 25, 5 may actually be Christian and the other ranging from agnostic to outright atheist.
 |
| * Poorly. How do you assess development of spiritual thinking and reflection other than through writing......dependent on students writing skills. Assessment makes CS become work and leads to the question "do we get credit for this" which leads to dry Religious curriculum in an attempt to give credit when personal reflection and growth....room for the Holy Spirit is the aim.
 |
| * In year 11 students sit an Inquiry-based assessment task. Teachers provide feedback to students and parents through online reporting.
 |
| * This has been the stumbling block, but our assessment is slowly changing for the better.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Do you think Christian Studies can be assessed?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Yes | 87.9% | 29 |
| No | 12.1% | 4 |

|  |
| --- |
| **In your opinion should Christian Studies be assessed in similar ways to other learning areas?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Yes | 69.7% | 23 |
| No | 30.3% | 10 |

|  |
| --- |
| **As a whole, what is the level of engagement of students in Christian Studies in years 11 and 12?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Very engaged | 0.0% | 0 |
| Engaged | 39.4% | 13 |
| Reasonably | 48.5% | 16 |
| Somewhat | 9.1% | 3 |
| Actively disengaged | 3.0% | 1 |

|  |
| --- |
| **What factors do you believe impact positively and negatively on their level of engagement?** |
| * The approach of the teacher and class sizes.
 |
| * The seminar days in Year 12 are hugely popular because they fit with the ethos of Y12 and allow the students to be treated as adults in an adult context and recognises that learning isn't just confined to a classroom. These kinds of external 'experiences' have so much more value. Year 11 students engage reasonably well, but they resent having to do Christian Studies when they'd rather be doing something else. In this instance having a teacher who is effective is important, but perhaps we could consider seminar days and experiences of a similar level of interactivity as Y12.
 |
| * If the student does not value the Christian way of life they are highly resistant to the program. Some students also feel as though the subject is less worthy of their time as it does not go towards their OP result.
 |
| * Relevant, challenging subject matter that is delivered in an honest down to earth manner.Negative - talking about ideas that are too abstract for students to connect with.
 |
| * Small discussion groups, good questions to guide discussion impacts on them positively. Real life topics are engaging.Too much theology and really deep questions can be too overwhelming for students and can have a negative effect.The teachers get together and pray at the start of each session.
 |
| * \* too much focus on religion impacts negatively\* assessment impacts negatively\* curriculums / programs impact negatively - should be allowed to develop our own programs that really connect to the kids
 |
| * Having a range of assessment tasks and a range of interesting resources. Having class members willing to participate rather than hold negative attitudes about Christianity.
 |
| * It is an 'extra' subject in a very busy and involved period of schooling. Students who enjoy discussion naturally get involved, but others are largely disengaged. If it doesn't count for ATAR, it doesn't really count!
 |
| * year 12 students get to choose which subject they do so they are more engaged.
 |
| * RELEVANCE TO THE STUDENTS' LIVES
 |
| * Conservative theologies that don't connect to their realities and the imposition of non-Christian World views.
 |
| * Topics studied and teacher rapport
 |
| * Positively - the topics we coverNegatively - society's negative view of the Christian faith and the focus on the ATAR score that is part of school (and a lot of society) culture
 |
| * Their own (and often their parents') own attitudes.Enthusiastic and honest teaching impacts for more positive attitudes.
 |
| * prior exposure to the Christian faith, lack of interest from home and society in general, peer perception
 |
| * Students are easily influenced by their peers and the classroom environment.
 |
| * Society's lack of value of things spiritual
 |
| * Passionate and understanding teaching impacts positively; negative attitudes of parents and students impacts negatively on level of engagement (although can be turned around by positive teachers)
 |
| * Biggest factors would be teacher personality/relationship and relevance of topics/units.Engagement is negatively affected by other life pressures eg exams, family problems, work load etc.
 |
| * Family culture, family history, social discourse, LCA expectations.
 |
| * Use of time for other subjects is a negative.
 |
| * Relevance - do they believe it to be relevant to their life. Trying to help them see that it is valuable to know regardless of whether or not it applies to the ATAR.
 |
| * Having assessed work is a motivation for them to pay attentionMaking topics of discussion "meaty" but not too draw out keeps their attentionRelating topics of discussion to contemporary society
 |
| * Students often comment that the subject is a 'waste of time' as it won't help them with their future, such as gaining a university entrance score.Other students feel that it is a good 'break' from the intensity of their other subjects. Some students find it very interesting on a personal level, and enjoy their study in the subject, as a result of this.
 |
| * The teachers own personal beliefs and approaches will impact on how a class is engaged.
 |
| * Not having a specific Christian Studies Focus.At least being able to have some Christian perspectives in Religion and Society.
 |
| * Teacher's methodology; course material; support through entire worship and pastoral care program of the school
 |
| * Low level of maturity of many students means they don't see the benefit of engaging; students know the subject doesn't count towards their OP so don't see it as being relevant; students don't see why they should have to 'waste time' on a subject that 'doesn't count'.
 |
| * The teaching capacity of the teacher and their wisdom, love and joy in sharing insights and encouraging them on their journey in understanding and dealing with reality and meaning in our lives in a positive and productive way.
 |
| * Positively - if the unit is engaging and involves the students on a deep level (and fun) the level of engagement is awesome.Negatively - The level of work and assignments they are having to do in other (seemingly for some more important) academic subjects
 |
| * Freedom of the teacher to explore their needs and leads I required. Assessment stifles personal engagement...we already train them to jump through hoops so only get the bare minimum...devalues the learning.
 |
| * Positive: Engaging Units with relevant topics.Negative: Students having an assumption that the subject wishes to convert them rather than challenge their way of thinking.
 |
| * Student driven investigation and interactive tasks lead to higher levels of engagement. Content dissemination for assessment purposes impacts negatively - and sometimes they are simply exhausted from other subject area demands - here stillness and reflective activities help.
 |

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| --- |
| **What direction would you like to see year 11 and 12 Christian Studies take in the future?** |
| * To continue working toward a deeply thought-provoking subject. One that challenges our students to become in tune with their spiritual side and perhaps become more open to the possibility of Christ.
 |
| * Entirely seminar based. Possibly with some AT school in the form of incursions. It's hard to assess Christian Studies as many students worry they are being assessed for 'religiousness' which in turn leads to them submitting assignments which 'ticks boxes' rather than acts as a true reflection of what they think/feel/believe and reinforces a lot of the thinking of religion as a land of absolutes and inflexible thinking, when of course it is not.
 |
| * The program offered at St Peters is a well-structured and thorough exploration. For a non-OP subject, however, the assessment could be reduced or simplified to reflect the level of importance that students place on the subject.
 |
| * For it to be based around addressing real life issues - such that it highlights how Christianity and a relationship with Christ can be integral in making sense of problems and finding a meaningful path in what can otherwise be a pointless existence
 |
| * Real life topics, a lot of reflection and discussion works well in our school.Small groups of 12/13 students with one teacher works well.Trained and passionate CS teachers are important.
 |
| * not curriculum based - no assessmentfreedom in selection of content
 |
| * I think it should move more towards teaching religion as an important social phenomenon and it should not be referred to as "Christian Studies" because this doesn't reflect the subject I teach. It is about religious literacy and ethics more than anything else.
 |
| * We have started using films as a prompt for engaging with significant issues, and then having a discussion session around Christian responses and engagement to the issues involved.I'm not sure that I can otherwise see a clear direction for students who have not chosen to engage with CS.
 |
| * more choice at year 11
 |
| * IT TO BE THOUGHT OF MORE AS 'INVESTIGATING SPIRITUALITY'
 |
| * Not sure. I am new to it. I believe in disciplining students and the mandate given to us by parents who choose a Christian school to bring the Gospel into their conscience.,
 |
| * I am happy with the direction it is heading, I think the topics are engaging and I am personally reviewing the content and methodology in order to make the course I teach even better. I guess I could add that it would be better if it was valued highly by all staff and students where I teach. Some students do approach it in a casual manner and it is not always valued school-wide by all teachers.
 |
| * Year 11 - a continued evolving of our curriculumYear 12. I am uncertain in my own mind about CS at Year 12 level. Having said that, I am happy with what happens here and enjoy the opportunity for really meaningful engagement with the students that happens through the course.
 |
| * For schools to continue to develop their own framework. Sharing of ideas and concepts for possible incorporation can be valuable. A yes/no answer for Q13 is not appropriate.
 |
| * I'd like to see it move away from being a VCE subject and become a time of either service learning or spiritual journey of discovery
 |
| * Assessment at year 12 level. More choice in subjects/areas of study
 |
| * Year 11 challenging kids in their views and thinking on important life issues and valuesYear 12 unsure of the value due to the pressure that is placed on them to achieve their score
 |
| * Continue as is for now.
 |
| * A mix of timetabled lessons and seminars. Also I think the best teachers in the school should be in CS classrooms. Teachers in general also require increased bible knowledge and wider faith base.
 |
| * High quality resourcing from LEA. Weekly and monthly dialogues amongst providers and central administrative centre.
 |
| * Better use of time. More in depth opportunities for students thinking.
 |
| * Academic subject that can be used for an ATAR - for those who choose it.Session based think spots for all other kids to challenge their thinking
 |
| * Treating it as an academic subject has relevance particularly if all students (Christian & non) are expected to participate.Having "alternative" pathways at senior school to connect with their level of interest / personal experience would be helpful
 |
| * I'm not too sure. I think that it is taught and received quite successfully at my school.
 |
| * Yr11 definitely needs to develop as a more focused curriculum - something we are working on at this time.Yr12 - well I believe that our approach is appropriate. Discussions which are relevant to current issues both local and global. This enables students to start really thinking about and voicing opinions. A good thing.
 |
| * At VLC I would like to see a program like Vetamorphosus be implemented into our senior years. I would be happy to take on some training in this area.
 |
| * Maintain status quo
 |
| * That it should "count" in some way. Further interesting units developed.
 |
| * Similar to now.
 |
| * A subject that allows students to see the wider world around them, where Christianity fits and is relevant to their life in the present and the contexts which they will find themselves in the future.
 |
| * Away from formal assessment...strong links to reflective practice, service and philosophy (good and evil, fate & free will etc)
 |
| * I would like to see Christian Studies continue as a unique subject in Lutheran Senior Schools as this subject provides a variety of perspectives for students to form their own faith basis.
 |
| * I believe there is a place for assessment/evaluation, but that it needs to be directly linked to the negotiated goals developed at the beginning of a unit and be authentic opportunities to share learning. Students need ownership of their learning for genuine growth to take place. I would also like to see more students opting to undertake Cert III in Christian Ministry, which draws on a student focused assessment model.
 |

## Basic Data, Part Three: Student Survey Results

|  |
| --- |
| **Please tick your year level** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Year 11 | 68.8% | 304 |
| Year 12 | 31.2% | 138 |
| ***answered question*** | **442** |
| ***skipped question*** | **0** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Are you a Christian?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Yes | 47.3% | 209 |
| No | 52.7% | 233 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Do you attend worship at a local church?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Yes | 19.9% | 86 |
| No | 80.1% | 346 |
| ***answered question*** | **432** |
| ***skipped question*** | **10** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Do you feel Christian Studies has been helpful in your spiritual journey?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Yes | 39.1% | 169 |
| No | 60.9% | 263 |
| Optional comment | 78 |
| ***answered question*** | **432** |
| ***skipped question*** | **10** |
| **Optional comment** |
| * It has made me consider the different possibilities in choosing a spirituality
 |
| * But it has still been a worthwhile subject
 |
| * In some ways it has made me a better person
 |
| * Not really, in some aspects yes in others no
 |
| * I feel that Christian studies really makes you think about things
 |
| * Not in Christianity, but at a personal level as well as learning about other views in other religions
 |
| * At times it is good, but mostly it’s not helpful
 |
| * still really unclear-has helped with a few points
 |
| * I think the time would have been more productive if we had extra time to study for other subjects
 |
| * In points, sometimes it can seem that the same common issues are be presented over each year and the repetitiveness can be quite boring
 |
| * Not all of it, some has been good e.g. yr 8 and 9 was good but after that it was just really annoying
 |
| * great for study lessons
 |
| * We focus too much on other religions
 |
| * To some extent
 |
| * Yes, it’s made me more understanding of other people and there religions
 |
| * It has allowed me to become more accepting of Christianity and allow me to understand their beliefs more in depth.
 |
| * It has made me more accepting of people of other religions
 |
| * However, it would be more helpful if teachers were open to more discussion about the topic.
 |
| * It has made me aware of the Bible and allowed me to form my opinion of Christ and teaches good values regardless of the person's religion
 |
| * It has made me aware of the varied types of religions, and also provided me with good values. I have been able to learn about the Bible, and form my own view on this religion.
 |
| * not on a spiritual journey
 |
| * Only helpful in ways of becoming a better person
 |
| * Christian Studies doesn't phase me
 |
| * Christian studies has guided me through different hardships in my life and has opened my spiritual self up to the world.
 |
| * I’ve always been taught values. I don’t need CS to teach me them
 |
| * I look at Christian studies as a subject to pass, not something that will assist me in my future
 |
| * I don't really follow a religion as such, but I enjoy learning about different cultures
 |
| * I feel Christian studies has helped understand concepts of life issues, but not as a spiritual journey as a non-Christian. The current year is the first time this has been the case, rather than attempting to 'convert' students to Christianity.
 |
| * I believe that this is dependent on the teacher though. I don't believe that the subject and teaching of Christianity has helped but I do believe that my current teacher has taught my life lessons/life issues outside of the subject.
 |
| * In a way, as I have learnt many things, but also not really on my journey
 |
| * Teacher is smart, considerate and brings newer light to Christianity, first time ever in Christian studies that lessons have been enjoyable
 |
| * In some aspects of learning
 |
| * Not all the time, but sometimes in the early years of studying it.
 |
| * Partly
 |
| * I find the discussions that occur in class interesting.
 |
| * Not at all
 |
| * Not really
 |
| * Kinda
 |
| * A spiritual journey should be an individual experience and should not be tampered with or influenced in what may seem harmless way but is also showing implicit bias.
 |
| * It’s a waste of time and takes time away from my other subjects
 |
| * Should be an optional subject.
 |
| * It really is just a waste of time especially with my teacher
 |
| * I believe it is a waste of time and should not be compulsory. I would rather have study periods to help with "proper" work.
 |
| * I feel that Christian Studies is a waste of time
 |
| * There a too many classes of it and I don't have time to study other subjects
 |
| * Have not had the chance as we just started.
 |
| * Somewhat
 |
| * Just not interested
 |
| * Studying for VCE is more important
 |
| * I would like to learn about Christianity, not other religions. This would be more beneficial to me to learn more about the Bible.
 |
| * actually useless
 |
| * Somewhat
 |
| * It is wrong and teaches stupidity
 |
| * It has helped my initial learning of God
 |
| * not overly intense which is good
 |
| * kind of
 |
| * I believe in Jesus and God but I don't go to church but yes I believe it has been useful
 |
| * Yes
 |
| * Sure
 |
| * Makes you see the world in a different way
 |
| * No
 |
| * Though I do not feel connected in the same way spiritually, it is still insightful and important for me to understand where people are coming from in accordance with their beliefs
 |
| * In some ways
 |
| * Only a little
 |
| * I would like to have a broader view of all religions - not just Christianity
 |
| * It is a good way to learn a deeper meaning into Christian studies
 |
| * It has at times but it doesn't link into our lives as teenagers
 |
| * Only at times
 |
| * During our classes I see the other students (unchristian) and I have and I am able to reflect through their responses and attitude towards the whole topic. It has supported my faith my by testing my level of resistance with the students of my grade and their attitude towards life.
 |
| * The work is more about other religions and ethics, but compares and contrasts back to Christianity.
 |
| * CS always has reflections on ourselves which is good
 |
| * I have leant various things.
 |
| * A little bit
 |
| * It has taught me that God will still love you and not judge you even though you have sinned. It’s nice to know that someone will still care about you even if you had done something wrong.
 |
| * Only a little bit.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Do you believe Christian Studies has helped you explore your theological and ethical questions?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Yes | 56.3% | 243 |
| No | 43.8% | 189 |
| ***answered question*** | **432** |
| ***skipped question*** | **10** |
| **What is the best thing about Christian Studies in this year?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Count** |
|   | 412 |
| ***answered question*** | **412** |
| ***skipped question*** | **30** |
| * Being able to talk about and consider the different ethics and morals that are involved in spirituality
 |
| * Looking into touchy topics and being able to asks questions about them and listen to what other peoples’ views on them are.
 |
| * A lot of the topics aren't based around Christianity but everything that is discussed is related to problems that relate everyone. It's more about your beliefs rather than the Christianity beliefs and values even though at times they are mentioned.
 |
| * talking about stuff
 |
| * It's more relaxed than all my other subjects.
 |
| * it is very open
 |
| * The relaxed feel and adult themes + teacher.
 |
| * Making friends and finding out more about people I didn’t know that well
 |
| * leaning about my self
 |
| * To interact with different students
 |
| * Learning more about religion and how it all works.
 |
| * Sharing deep thoughts and discussion with the class
 |
| * discussing the mysteries of the cosmos
 |
| * Dealing with real life issues
 |
| * It's been interesting in a way and there aren't many tasks required to be completed.
 |
| * Being able to investigate the Christian faith more and to go deeper in my thinking and knowledge of my faith. It has really strengthened my faith.
 |
| * You get to think about more personal thoughts.
 |
| * The study lessons
 |
| * Definitely learning about oppression around the world. It widened my views
 |
| * The enjoyment of Tender Loving Care and learning about Christ.
 |
| * the discussion about why God allows suffering
 |
| * Group discussions where we could explore everyone's views and opinions in depth
 |
| * I feel that the best thing about CS this year has probably been all the discussions that happen during class. Some better than others.
 |
| * Watching movies
 |
| * When we were studying the meaning of life- I liked learning more about this.
 |
| * movies
 |
| * dunno
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Nap time
 |
| * being able to create an article of my choice and with my own meaning
 |
| * They don't force religion onto us.
 |
| * Fellowship with other students
 |
| * The ability to explore one's own beliefs
 |
| * The fun
 |
| * we got to watch a movie
 |
| * Getting to know others religious beliefs and their cultures.
 |
| * Getting to know each other, discussions
 |
| * Crave has been more of a burden than any help at all
 |
| * the creative assignments
 |
| * Reflection on 'the meaning of life'
 |
| * Watching Gran Turino, also the low pressure environment.
 |
| * Discussions and ethical reasoning
 |
| * learning about different ideas from different religions
 |
| * talking
 |
| * No one forces you into believing what you don’t want to. They educate you and inform you so you can make your own decisions.
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Easy
 |
| * the ease
 |
| * Being able to [speak rubbish] through the course
 |
| * Listening to people's stories about grief of things they have lost.
 |
| * It has focused on some newer topics and goes into more depth and meaning.
 |
| * That we are not so much looking at Christianity in general, but different issues around the world that can be related back to a religion is some way.
 |
| * I found the topic of "capital punishment" very interesting to discuss with my classmates. Hearing different perspectives was eye opening for me. It was also interesting to argue for or against capital punishment in specific, set circumstances.
 |
| * That sometimes we get study times
 |
| * study lessons
 |
| * Study
 |
| * No summative assignments
 |
| * Watching Amish people
 |
| * Study Lessons - when there is someAlthough, going out to the community was good
 |
| * Exploring religions that we may not be exposed to much in our country.
 |
| * Being able to look into and study the different religions of the world. And obtain a broader understanding of all of them
 |
| * Exploring more in-depth.
 |
| * Learning and understanding more about other religions
 |
| * The best thing about Christian Studies is that it has allowed me to understand and comprehend not only other peoples’ religions but has helped me accept their way of life better.
 |
| * Learning about different religions
 |
| * My teacher was really lovely and fun. I also enjoyed exploring my theological and ethical views.
 |
| * How it’s helped me understand other religions and other peoples world views. this has made me understand and accept their views
 |
| * Learning about all the different kinds of suffering in the world and how people have reacted in terms of their faith. It was very interesting.
 |
| * The further understanding of other people and their religions.
 |
| * The best thing about Christian Studies this year is learning about the different reasoning behind evil and suffering in the world.
 |
| * Watching Movies
 |
| * The grade is all togetherWe are open to say our point of view
 |
| * - it is in a large group- we can express our views freely to others
 |
| * The teacher’s talks
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * Talking about ethical problems and getting everyone's opinion on them.
 |
| * The conversations with my companion teacher.
 |
| * Learning about previous events in Australian history
 |
| * Unsure
 |
| * being a year level group class so we are all together
 |
| * Really getting an inside from guest speakers about how it is to be homeless and not have a family that provides for you and cares for you
 |
| * Advice from my Companion teacher about life
 |
| * Christian Studies is done in smaller groups rather than large classes
 |
| * We are commenting on real-world problems and debating some suggestions seriously.
 |
| * We have companion groups and are able to split up to discuss theories more.
 |
| * Christian Studies doesn't phase me
 |
| * In our school Christian studies is good when we go off in separate smaller groups from the grade to talk more openly with a smaller group.
 |
| * The best thing was what we were learning about because it is interesting
 |
| * Nothing has been very good.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * I have enjoyed the small care groups.
 |
| * We get two periods a fortnight of nothing
 |
| * Group work
 |
| * Being in groups
 |
| * Being able to ask questions in smaller groups. It was easier to express my opinion
 |
| * Going in the groups
 |
| * We watched a movie
 |
| * The fact that we can have group discussions
 |
| * the guest speakers who come in
 |
| * Discussions
 |
| * waste 2 hours
 |
| * The people in my Christian studies class.
 |
| * I like how we are learning as a grade
 |
| * Talks
 |
| * Some of the discussions we end up having.
 |
| * Learning
 |
| * Companion groups because we get more of a voice
 |
| * Guest speakers
 |
| * Having it every second week
 |
| * Get to look at things in a different perspective
 |
| * It is a lot more relaxed and open
 |
| * Friends
 |
| * Hygiene
 |
| * Discussing some questions that relate to us in our companion groups.
 |
| * The focus isn't particularly on God but in self-development; more engaging.
 |
| * They aren't shoving religion down our throats like previous years
 |
| * Learning about worldviews and ethics of cultures that interest me.
 |
| * ethics
 |
| * My current teacher is the best and only good thing about Christian studies.
 |
| * My current teacher is the best thing about this subject.
 |
| * Not much work and lots of debating
 |
| * the research and my teacher
 |
| * We discuss topics that are meaningful and topics that need further discussion and explanation.
 |
| * The theological and philosophical topics explored, particularly those that are pertinent to society today and provide a better understanding of the way we operate.
 |
| * Being able to talk about life's issues in a good environment
 |
| * That we all get to have our own input in discussions
 |
| * The debates we have in class and the teacher always have really good topics to discuss.
 |
| * My teacher
 |
| * talking about life and how we can change
 |
| * Being able to debate issues
 |
| * The best part has been listening to presentations on Political correctness and watching relevant videos.
 |
| * We are able to express our views on life and our beliefs and hear about others opinions.
 |
| * openly expressing my criticisms of the Catholic church
 |
| * we can discuss our opinions and beliefs, and are able to debate about relevant topics in relation to a views
 |
| * - class discussions
 |
| * I like arguing/debating with my teacher
 |
| * the unit about political correctness
 |
| * Being able to express our opinions.
 |
| * It's helped me to think more.
 |
| * We spend more time going in depth and discussing things, which is easier to learn from.
 |
| * They make us think about how we think.
 |
| * we have a good teacher who is very intelligent
 |
| * The structure of the lessons
 |
| * The teachers
 |
| * I find it enjoyable as I am learning about my faith and discovering the story of Jesus while I am facing new challenges through puberty.
 |
| * Political correctness
 |
| * The teachers
 |
| * Nothing in particular
 |
| * They make us think about how we think in a certain way
 |
| * The bell at the end of the lesson
 |
| * Teacher
 |
| * Going to a Buddhist temple and a mosque.
 |
| * The best thing is most of our time are doing discuss.
 |
| * I understand much about western culture.
 |
| * I know more information about the God and his stories.
 |
| * Knowing about the history of Christianity
 |
| * Watching movies
 |
| * It’s pretty slow paced and its relaxing compared to other subjects
 |
| * Class discussions, this allows me to have an insight to how other people worship and their faith in their Gods.
 |
| * Discussing questions as a class and being able to talk openly and honestly.
 |
| * learning about the history of Christians
 |
| * It’s easygoing and interesting to have discussions
 |
| * Learning about how the different types of worship of different religions happened.
 |
| * Movies
 |
| * I have learnt about the history of various religions that I didn't know about before.
 |
| * Discussions of interesting issues and watching interesting videos.
 |
| * I have learnt new facts about some things I am now very fascinated in.
 |
| * The ability to further look into what I believe and what to be provided more knowledge on different religious views. This year we have focussed on what we believe and how we can come to an understanding on this. It has allowed me to understand my views and open up new perspectives.
 |
| * No homework
 |
| * Watching the Bucket List film
 |
| * It doesn't count for my OP so I don't have to try.
 |
| * Since my family is not Christian, the school subject provides me with the opportunity to learn more about world religions and others' beliefs.
 |
| * It has helped me to think about new aspects of life
 |
| * Watching the Bucket List movie
 |
| * Learning about people
 |
| * The end of each period
 |
| * Seeing other peoples’ worldviews and the way they stand up for themselves.
 |
| * Learning about all the different cultures
 |
| * It's not entirely related to religion but more so to ethics
 |
| * watching the bucket list movie
 |
| * The movies we watched were good
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Absolutely nothing, to be honest I only come because I have to.
 |
| * Learning about how Christianity has effected other religions and places all throughout the world
 |
| * The best section of the Christian Studies was the Aboriginal Spirituality. The historical aspects were somewhat informative.
 |
| * I have no opinion on this question
 |
| * It has taught me about the different cultures (Aboriginal) and about their history, spirituality.
 |
| * The class is fun
 |
| * The class
 |
| * My friends and free time
 |
| * I like the people in my class
 |
| * Good class
 |
| * going on the excursion
 |
| * Being able to address the "hard" issues like suffering, along with good and evil.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * exploring other religions
 |
| * I saw Joffrey Baratehon DIE
 |
| * doing almost nothing
 |
| * nothing...
 |
| * wasting time doing nothing
 |
| * Going to Maccas on an excursion
 |
| * Buddhism
 |
| * I enjoy the group discussions
 |
| * NOTHING
 |
| * We watched Game of Thrones
 |
| * It's a bludge subject
 |
| * going to Buddhist church
 |
| * We went to a Buddhist Temple
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * speakers
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * The best thing this year about Christian Studies has been the future focus approach. The unit where we are to prepare a journal allows me to reflect on my own beliefs and goals for the future. The term 1 unit where we focused on the contributions of person in shaping the world to become what it is today as well as their beliefs was a very interesting unit. It allowed me to identify the past contributions and look up to them as a role model and inspiration.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Watching Insightful videos about meaning and purpose
 |
| * The fact that we actively explore other religions and cultures to acquire a greater understanding of the different people that this world consists of.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * The discussion of ethics and morality.
 |
| * It is a relaxed learning environment
 |
| * The poster making
 |
| * small class & easily able to ask questions
 |
| * watching movies
 |
| * Bringing up ethical issues and debating them
 |
| * Watching the movies.
 |
| * bonding with my classmates
 |
| * Class discussions about important issues
 |
| * To be able to discuss openly about a variety of different topics.
 |
| * The best thing is that I don't have a teacher that judges me for not being a Christian
 |
| * class discussions
 |
| * Small Personal class
 |
| * Learning the different religions all over the world
 |
| * Learning about other religions, with their interesting backgrounds.
 |
| * That we can be more creative than most other subjects in Year 11.
 |
| * Learning about a range of world religions
 |
| * No homework and discovering the connection between Islamism and Christianity
 |
| * Watching videos about other cultures.
 |
| * We study other religions
 |
| * Being able to study different religions.
 |
| * Excursions
 |
| * Eating a giant cookie in the Mosque
 |
| * Excursions and learning about other religions
 |
| * I don't enjoy CS, although this year has been better because it is focused on various religions.
 |
| * learning about other religions
 |
| * learning about other religions
 |
| * The best thing about Christian Studies is learning how different groups of people in the world view different religions.
 |
| * Learning about all the different topics studied in class while having open class discussions which leads to productive thinking and very open-minded.
 |
| * learning about other religions
 |
| * To learn about other global religions such as Buddhism and Islam.
 |
| * meditation relaxation
 |
| * die Menge an Arbeit,
 |
| * Learning about other religions
 |
| * Missing out on other boring subjects
 |
| * Learning about other religions
 |
| * Meeting people who had other faith backgrounds than I.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * meeting people from different religions
 |
| * Missing some school time
 |
| * substitute teachers
 |
| * It lets us explore interesting issues about life. It is also easy.
 |
| * Learning about and understanding various religious beliefs and the individuals that follow them
 |
| * It's interesting
 |
| * Talks from various people from different religions around Australia
 |
| * It’s easy
 |
| * Everyone is open towards all religions
 |
| * Exploring different religions
 |
| * The dvd's
 |
| * The documentaries
 |
| * The talks
 |
| * I have been able to widen my knowledge about other religions
 |
| * Meditation that we were promised to do... but only did once.
 |
| * Mindfulness , meditation , relaxation
 |
| * Free time
 |
| * Meditation
 |
| * When we get to do meditation
 |
| * Free periods
 |
| * Meditation time and class discussion
 |
| * Relaxation time, reflection
 |
| * Meditation and sleep
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * meditation times
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * When it was cancelled I got to actually study for actual important subjects that actually count in my atar.
 |
| * relaxation and study time
 |
| * A time to relax
 |
| * study time
 |
| * Time to study for year 12 subjects
 |
| * Study time
 |
| * My teachers support and the meditation.
 |
| * My teacher
 |
| * Talking about how the actions we take now will affect us later in life
 |
| * The time we spend relaxing aids in our busy year 12 life
 |
| * Christian studies has very little benefit in my opinion, especially since the "Lutheran" School I attend has a Lutheran population of about six (including me) out of roughly 1100 students. I attend church weekly, and feel that Christian studies is a waste of time.
 |
| * Lachies arguments
 |
| * Arguments
 |
| * I'm not doing it. I am doing Vetamorphus instead
 |
| * doing the Vetamorphus course.
 |
| * It is good to be reminded of God and that he is always here to guide us. Even in a stressful year.
 |
| * Questions doubt in your belief, and then puts it to rest with answers.
 |
| * Relaxation
 |
| * Doing an assessment on grief, where we have to interview someone on their experiences.
 |
| * learning different peoples’ views
 |
| * The relaxed nature
 |
| * the relaxation we do in class and time away from studies
 |
| * Its stress relieving
 |
| * Having a break from year 12
 |
| * Getting the chance to sleep.
 |
| * sleeping
 |
| * we get to relax however we also get to learn about ethics
 |
| * The free time for relaxation and consolidation
 |
| * Meditation and class discussions.
 |
| * Chilling
 |
| * -Meditation-Spiritual exploration
 |
| * Developing life strategies for the future including study techniques and planning/organising my future.
 |
| * Learning about the different types of ethics.
 |
| * Mmm not sure
 |
| * Indigenous spirituality
 |
| * The people
 |
| * The movie.
 |
| * Movies
 |
| * Being able to voice our own opinion and knowing it's acceptable.
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * Learning about Indigenous Spirituality
 |
| * Watching the movie Avatar.
 |
| * The tranquillity nature of it is peaceful
 |
| * Doing assessment tasks. The story was the standout.
 |
| * Playing
 |
| * Doing maths b in the subject
 |
| * The flexibility of assessment
 |
| * Movie watching
 |
| * Familiarising myself with underrepresented faiths. The fact that Christianity isn't the only religion explored is appealing, especially to someone like myself who is agnostic. Perhaps the class should be called religion studies instead
 |
| * Learn new things
 |
| * Watching Avatar
 |
| * I don’t know
 |
| * Getting to play games
 |
| * Doing nothing
 |
| * I am still yet to find something that really interests me.
 |
| * We got to explore Australian values and cultures etc
 |
| * The fact that we studied more relevant topics this year is definitely an appealing aspect of Christian Studies.
 |
| * We get time to socialise and talk about our almighty God and praise his son Jesus Christ.
 |
| * The exploration of different beliefs in other cultures
 |
| * Watching movies
 |
| * Studying other religions.
 |
| * Watching Avatar
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * Exploring different religions
 |
| * Watching Avatar
 |
| * Being able to explore our own ideas about religion more thoroughly.
 |
| * Watching Avatar
 |
| * Leaning about aboriginal spirituality
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Learning about the cultures and how they react to being invaded. For example the Australian Aboriginal culture versus the Avatar movie.
 |
| * The aboriginal spirituality
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Watching movies
 |
| * Being about to discuss things as a class.
 |
| * Nothing, last year was better because we discussed more personal things to do with everyday life.
 |
| * Not having to learn anything
 |
| * Not having to do anything
 |
| * The familiar topics
 |
| * The little amount of work
 |
| * Learning about ethics.
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * Learning about others views
 |
| * Looking at the influence of view points of the world
 |
| * When we are faced with questions that don't have a particular answer and talking about conspiracies.
 |
| * We are very individual/independent learners. we're able to work to our ability and attitude towards the subject
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * Exploring the meaning of life and seeing how it affects it just us but other people in the world around us.
 |
| * I don't know..
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * To learn about the worldview and belief
 |
| * The best thing about CS would be that we have a great teacher who teaches our class
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * The pursuit of happiness
 |
| * My teacher.
 |
| * The tasks are fairly simple.
 |
| * My teacher
 |
| * It is an open classroom where there is not as much pressure in terms of academics.
 |
| * Learning about people's experiences
 |
| * The way it was taught by our teacher
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * There is never a wrong answer
 |
| * our teacher
 |
| * Our ethics unit
 |
| * mm
 |
| * It allows me to give back to the community and reflect on relevant issues that will benefit me in young adulthood.
 |
| * This year, learning about other religions and how they compare to Christianity is interesting.
 |
| * Christian Studies allow a different perspective on the Bible and God. This subject introduced new and different knowledge about the Bible.
 |
| * Getting an A- !
 |
| * interesting topics on ethics
 |
| * learning about the sides of truth
 |
| * There is a diverse range of ways to be assessed. Like different pathways to complete an assignment or different questions to chose from on an exam.
 |
| * Aboriginal Spirituality
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * watching indigenous moviestemple excursions
 |
| * temple and mosque excursions
 |
| * We explored indigenous culture
 |
| * The best thing about Christian Studies is being able to explore the history of Revelation. It has also helped me to help understand more about the Crucifixion of Jesus.
 |
| * The best thing is that we are not re-learning things but we are learning new and interesting things that are very entertaining.
 |
| * The assessment is not difficult and it is a relaxing subject in the business of year 12.
 |
| * The teachers
 |
| * It does not force Christian views upon anyone; at my school Christian Studies is about learning different religious viewpoints; promoting respect for all cultures
 |
| * Dr Peter Vardy visit
 |
| * no homework
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **What is the most difficult thing about Christian Studies in this year?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Count** |
|   | 412 |
| ***answered question*** | **412** |
| ***skipped question*** | **30** |
| * Having to complete assignments along with other school work
 |
| * Watching movies
 |
| * Being open to others about your opinion, due to the fact that no everyone believes in the same thing as you.
 |
| * talking about stuff
 |
| * The confronting discussions
 |
| * talking about my self
 |
| * Feeling comfortable with talking about things with other people in the class.
 |
| * confrontational questions
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Trusting other people with your responses
 |
| * The awkwardness and difficult topics
 |
| * Confronting fears and difficult questions
 |
| * talking about suicide and homosexuality
 |
| * The upfront topics
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Probably having to keep up with all the work. I'm doing Vetamorphus & the work is pretty demanding if you don't stay on top of it.
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * The in depth discussion about passages in the Bible
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Keeping up with all the assignments with all other school work.
 |
| * trying to answer questions about your own life, I find it hard to discuss issues involving myself
 |
| * The tasks that I feel I really didn't benefit from a whole lot
 |
| * Some of the ways questions are worded.
 |
| * Assignments
 |
| * When we had to study flags and symbols-I found it hard to find the meaning of this.
 |
| * everything
 |
| * dunno
 |
| * the fact that it takes up time that i could be doing other subjects and therefore is a waste of time
 |
| * It's really boring
 |
| * coping with a class of students that don't care
 |
| * Having to open up to different things.
 |
| * Having to hand up assignments that are not a priority to me, which lowers the grades of other more important subjects such as English
 |
| * The need to write detailed "reports" about other religions. (Often, little information is given)
 |
| * The religion aspect
 |
| * understanding it
 |
| * Trying to understand why people do what they do religious way.
 |
| * research
 |
| * it’s not difficult - the work is of a 3rd year level
 |
| * the due dates
 |
| * Group talking
 |
| * Trying to stay engaged when I have other work that needs doing.
 |
| * Debates
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Talking
 |
| * Takes up other lesson times.
 |
| * having to listen
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * The work
 |
| * I feel as if it is a waste of studying time
 |
| * That it takes away from possible frees
 |
| * Nothing really
 |
| * Some questions being asked on differing topics have tested me in how I should answer them, based on my Christian belief.
 |
| * Understanding some of the things that have happened around the world, through a Christian perspective.
 |
| * I haven't really found Christian studies to be that demanding. Sometimes it was hard to find motivation to complete tasks when compared to other, immediate demands of other, more pressing subjects.
 |
| * it gets in the way
 |
| * not having study to study
 |
| * Easter service
 |
| * It’s not hard, difficulty is that when I have work to do I can’t do it as I have to listen to CS
 |
| * Understanding the concept of Christian Studies this year
 |
| * Some of it is boring
 |
| * Probably, attempting to compare the religions and looking at what are the similarities and differences.
 |
| * Understanding the principles
 |
| * Finding good sources of information on other religions
 |
| * I often feel like I am wasting valuable time, which I could be spending on my OP subjects
 |
| * Understanding the scale of God
 |
| * It was difficult to focus on myself, when I don't normally do that.
 |
| * How I often feel like I'm wasting important time in a non-OP subject, which could be spent on OP subjects
 |
| * Trying to find the time to do the work well when I have other subjects that actually count toward my education.
 |
| * As a non OP subject, I often feel like I'm wasting time that could be spent on OP subjects
 |
| * The most difficult thing about Christian Studies this year is the fact that there was an exam as our assessment.
 |
| * Paying attention
 |
| * When you don't know what your opinion actually is
 |
| * - when you are unsure about your answers to Christian- related questions
 |
| * The assignments
 |
| * the assignments
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * Sitting and listening for a little under 2 hours
 |
| * Everything regarding events from the Bible
 |
| * Sitting and listening for 2 hours to people ranting about God
 |
| * we now have exams instead of just assignments
 |
| * Not knowing what the exams about
 |
| * Putting what we learn into practice daily
 |
| * Not sure
 |
| * Nothing is very difficult, but being asked to reflect on the Christian side of things is sometimes confusing.
 |
| * Trying to get the concept on some topics that we are doing
 |
| * Christian Studies doesn't phase me
 |
| * In one of our lessons we had to wash each others feet and it was a daunting task and pushed myself and us all in the group.
 |
| * Answering questions on what I believe
 |
| * It's pretty easy to be honest.
 |
| * thinking beyond
 |
| * Being exposed to beliefs which I do not agree with.
 |
| * staying awake
 |
| * Essays
 |
| * Not agreeing with Christian beliefs and being encouraged to believe them
 |
| * Trying to understand and interpret actions.
 |
| * The fact that you are judged and faulted for not believing what is taught
 |
| * Not sure
 |
| * Keeping concentration
 |
| * the assignments
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * the assignments
 |
| * No difficulties
 |
| * I haven't found anything difficult
 |
| * Exam
 |
| * Nothing really.
 |
| * The tests
 |
| * Hearing my own opinion in the group
 |
| * Understanding concepts
 |
| * Double lesson
 |
| * Explaining answers in a Christian perspective
 |
| * Finding what I really believe in and being open about it
 |
| * exams
 |
| * Fitting
 |
| * Trying to evaluate and analyse the Bible stories as they are confusing and we have to interpret what they are trying to convey. There can occasionally be one answer and when it is not explained to us, we have trouble with the Bible verses.
 |
| * having to share my opinions
 |
| * There are a lot of deep questions we are expected to answer.
 |
| * Finding time for the assignments around other subjects.
 |
| * big words
 |
| * The most difficult thing about Christian studies is the deep thought required for the written and oral tasks.
 |
| * Nothing is really difficult other than the assignments/essays that are required.
 |
| * Having to think... hard
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Nothing, apart from it requiring lots of thing and processing but that isn't necessarily a bad thing.
 |
| * I don't understand the question. Are you suggesting content wise, time-table wise, belief wise? Please be more specific in the future.
 |
| * Occasionally, answering questions is difficult.
 |
| * That some of the topics discussed question my beliefs
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * debates
 |
| * learning things I don’t know much about
 |
| * Searching for information on topics for assignments
 |
| * The most difficult thing has been the first assignment where I could not do any research on the topic.
 |
| * Some people can get quite opinionated and therefore argumentative.
 |
| * staying on task, because it does not go towards my tertiary education entrance mark
 |
| * some people take up a lot of time trying to prove a point with no basis to prove it with, and waste time
 |
| * - deep questions about life
 |
| * There's a lot of free discussion and sometimes one person takes up too much time with a stupid point.
 |
| * finding the motivation to do work
 |
| * Being able to comprehend some of the theories.
 |
| * Nothing. I love it.
 |
| * Sometimes having a class discussion is tiring, and if you miss a bit, you get confused.
 |
| * nothing really difficult
 |
| * keeping up with the group conversations
 |
| * Being challenged to think about life issues
 |
| * Understanding things
 |
| * Completing the website, history aspect
 |
| * Doing Christian stuff
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Nothing really difficult
 |
| * doing work
 |
| * Sometimes paying attention
 |
| * The most difficult thing is sometimes don't understand the content of the topic.
 |
| * some of the knowledge is difficult to understand
 |
| * Some words are hard to understand.
 |
| * Nothing, teacher helped us a lot
 |
| * The Essays
 |
| * The knowledge that I could be doing more productive things
 |
| * Remaining interested in topics that i don't enjoy too much.
 |
| * Only having 600 words for the essays.
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * I don't find it difficult
 |
| * It’s not always very interesting and it’s hard to follow and remember everything that happened
 |
| * essays which are too short to write anything substantial
 |
| * Having to stick to a 600 word limit for my essays/ reflections
 |
| * The work, I’m not a fan of doing work.
 |
| * Some of the essays.
 |
| * The most difficult thing is really self-evaluating my own beliefs, what I believe is more important. The work program really focuses on self-discovery including what I believe is the good life. I find this quite confronting and challenging, I would never have pursed this line on though individually.
 |
| * Assignments...sort of.
 |
| * The Assignment
 |
| * Having to do work when it doesn't count for my OP
 |
| * The assignments are very time consuming. I believe that we should be focusing more on other subjects which contribute to our OP score.
 |
| * The assignments are far too big, and we should be spending more time on our other assignments which are more important
 |
| * Having to do the assignment along with 6 other subjects with equal work loads
 |
| * Maintaining the workload of this subject with other QSA subjects.
 |
| * I have trouble studying for other subjects in it
 |
| * Understanding Christianity as I find it hard to wrap my head around.
 |
| * I’m not Christian but it’s interesting to learn about different cultures.
 |
| * Assessments that take long to complete
 |
| * the assignment on top of our other assignments that actually count for something.
 |
| * The written assessments
 |
| * turning up
 |
| * Trying to understand something I don't care about.
 |
| * Trying to think of an answer for this question.
 |
| * Vague spiritual aspects.
 |
| * Doing the assignments
 |
| * I have no opinion on this question
 |
| * Paying attention
 |
| * It does take up a lot of time even though it doesn’t count towards anything
 |
| * It takes a lot of time even though it doesn't count towards anything. e.g. OP
 |
| * The fact that it does not count to OP
 |
| * Takes up a lot of time and effort for subject that actually count towards my OP.
 |
| * Having to spend time on it which takes up my time for subjects that count towards my OP
 |
| * the fact that does not go towards op
 |
| * Too much to do in so little time
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Dealing with my classmates stupidity.
 |
| * it’s not really that difficult
 |
| * having fun
 |
| * having to put up with it
 |
| * exams
 |
| * learning about other religions
 |
| * NOTHING
 |
| * Nothing it is all easy
 |
| * Nothing. It's a bludge subject
 |
| * that it’s boring and I don’t need it
 |
| * Stupid people being stupid
 |
| * Nothing is difficult just I believe it is all irrelevant especially the wasting of class times "meditating" in the Chapel
 |
| * It takes up study time.
 |
| * not sure
 |
| * Going to class
 |
| * I have found both units of Christian Studies in year 12 interesting. The most difficult thing would have been sorting through my own ideas and perceptions of the world to come up with my own world view.
 |
| * Sitting in the class
 |
| * Managing work with other assignments
 |
| * To reflect on our personal missions, in what we believe we will accomplish and what we deem important in aspects of life such as morals and values.
 |
| * Going to the Classes
 |
| * It takes study time away from other subjects.
 |
| * A lot of reading is involved
 |
| * Having faith in a different denomination of Christianity than the School I attend. Therefore, it is hard to relate to those especially when my beliefs can be vastly different at times.
 |
| * exploring spiritual questions and finding an answer
 |
| * ethics
 |
| * talking about ethical issues without getting personal
 |
| * Understanding the tasks.
 |
| * staying focused
 |
| * finding time for it, with all the pressure of year 12
 |
| * Thinking about different situations going on around the World.
 |
| * Having to pretend that I am Christian to get a good grade
 |
| * relating to some stuff we have talked about
 |
| * It's not entertaining and hard to keep focused
 |
| * Remembering all of the different types of Religions
 |
| * Remembering the various names and places, as well as other facts about certain religions.
 |
| * The most difficult thing about Christian Studies in this year is trying to find time to work on the subjects around the other subjects I study.
 |
| * learning the different ways of life and worship for other religions
 |
| * there are a lot of new terms and phrases to learn
 |
| * It's a waste of time and it stresses me out.
 |
| * Nothing really. I don't really like the class and therefore the amount of work but I have to do it and we do study other religions too.
 |
| * Nothing so far; it's been two weeks.
 |
| * Assignments
 |
| * I think it is a waste of time; we didn't choose this subject and it is not counting for anything and we have so much other study that I think we would all much rather be doing
 |
| * Classes are mostly non-Christians so it's really hard to ask questions, and there's also not much of the 'Christian' part of Christian studies.
 |
| * Honestly, I have only been doing CS for 2 weeks, but so far nothing is difficult.
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Understanding how some religions formed and came to be.
 |
| * Thinking outside the box.
 |
| * writing so much
 |
| * Comprehending ideas on certain religions that contrast to my values.
 |
| * other subject exams pressing
 |
| * bleiben auf Aufgabe
 |
| * Not sure
 |
| * Paying attention
 |
| * Doing pointless work
 |
| * Having to collate so many notes. I think this was unnecessary. Also the "I am a chameleon, gorilla etc were pointless.
 |
| * Just not being interested in the topic.
 |
| * having the topics forced on you
 |
| * Staying interested
 |
| * concentrating
 |
| * Concentrating and arguing about issues which people have strong opinions on
 |
| * Following the program when I am not religious at all nor care about religion
 |
| * My teacher talks so much
 |
| * None
 |
| * we don’t get to play games
 |
| * My teacher talks too much
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Motivation to participate
 |
| * Motivation to participate
 |
| * Don't know
 |
| * staying awake
 |
| * The touchy subjects that we discuss
 |
| * Watching a movie
 |
| * Atheists in the room
 |
| * It is added pressure
 |
| * I find some of the content seems useless
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Having too much work when stressed
 |
| * Staying awake
 |
| * Having an extra unnecessary class when we have the pressure of multiple other VCE subjects
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Having to have extra added pressure on the workload that we already have by doing in our other 5 VCE subjects
 |
| * Staying awake.
 |
| * Seriously. It’s the biggest joke.
 |
| * not much
 |
| * not much
 |
| * study time
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Dealing with ethical issues
 |
| * Speaking out with opinions about my beliefs.
 |
| * Having to sit next to a mean person
 |
| * Answering those challenging questions
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * There is nothing that is difficult about Christian studies.
 |
| * turning up
 |
| * Turning up to class
 |
| * The amount of work
 |
| * All the work required.
 |
| * It is hard to juggle school and faith.
 |
| * Expression of complex ideas/beliefs.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Nothing was difficult.
 |
| * time management
 |
| * Nothing has been difficult
 |
| * nothing really
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Nothing really,
 |
| * Understanding the concepts of ethics. And some of the movies.
 |
| * time
 |
| * not trying to be against the concepts of Christianity as I myself am not a Christian
 |
| * Nothing (this year)
 |
| * Watching films.
 |
| * I don’t know
 |
| * Making it compulsory
 |
| * Having the extra workload of assignments and exams on top of all my other year 12 assignments and exams.
 |
| * Mmm not sure
 |
| * Understanding very different cultures and beliefs
 |
| * The first task
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Speeches
 |
| * The assessment as everybody has different views. So I'm not sure whether I'm right or wrong.
 |
| * Aboriginals.
 |
| * Having people who are so narrow minded
 |
| * Staying focused.
 |
| * The work
 |
| * Nothing, pretty straightforward.
 |
| * Staying awake
 |
| * That it takes up time that we could have used on other subjects
 |
| * The different cultures task
 |
| * Sitting next to [student]
 |
| * Keeping my mind open
 |
| * Writing essays
 |
| * The writing task
 |
| * I don’t know
 |
| * I don't know
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * I am still to find something difficult.
 |
| * Staying on task in the class room because most of the other students are very distracting as well as trying to answer most of the questions because the others do not participate
 |
| * Having to deal with concepts I will never adopt is an issue apparent in Christian Studies for me.
 |
| * First period of the day, I’m still asleep, so I guess concentrating is the hardest thing.
 |
| * Working on iPads
 |
| * Staying awake
 |
| * Assessment
 |
| * Nothing really
 |
| * The time it takes up
 |
| * Being enthused about class
 |
| * The writing task about the Europeans
 |
| * Nothing - Christian Studies remains quite simple if I try to keep an open mind and as long as my teacher doesn't preach to me during class. I don't appreciate being lectured about how Christianity is better than other religions, that isn't teaching, that's brainwashing.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * In class writing
 |
| * Nothing is difficult, it is just that I don't want to do the work.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * The exams and assignments
 |
| * Nothing that I can think of.
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * Nothing, it's an easy subject
 |
| * Easy
 |
| * The exams
 |
| * The exam
 |
| * The topics didn't interest me and it was all theory based which was very boring. More activities would be good.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Having nothing to relate it back to
 |
| * Responding with personal influences
 |
| * Concentrating in Christian studies can be hard as not many lessons are enjoyable.
 |
| * I personally find difficult with the people in my grade/school and their attitude towards the subject. Their lack of respect and care is honestly offensive towards the teacher and myself as a Christian.
 |
| * Having to do work in my new class.
 |
| * Not completely understanding the work that is taught in our class because it is explained unclearly.
 |
| * Having to think about my life and my morals
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * I am not Christian, some views are hard to understand
 |
| * The exams are by far the most difficult thing about Christian studies this year
 |
| * Not learning other beliefs only focusing on the Christian viewpoint
 |
| * The challenging exams
 |
| * Nothing much
 |
| * Nothing in particular.
 |
| * Staying on task
 |
| * Nothing much.
 |
| * Getting your head around things.
 |
| * Being questioned about life
 |
| * The assignments
 |
| * It's hard because there is no correct answer
 |
| * the confusing work
 |
| * Our teacher does not give us adequate time for class discussions, instead he talks at us and fails to engage the class in something I believe has real merit in learning
 |
| * There is some difference of opinion among peers but other than that not much.
 |
| * Learning about other religions is also hard because it is a bit sad that these people who worship other gods don't know who the true, life saving God is.
 |
| * The depth of detail we had looked into Revelations was most difficult to understand.
 |
| * Nothing was that hard.
 |
| * peer pressure
 |
| * the assessment
 |
| * To be honest, I don't really find C.S very difficult and I think I speak on behalf of a majority of people. However, it's about how much effort you're willing to contribute.
 |
| * Learning about other religions such as Buddhism and Islam.
 |
| * Having to do work that is in no way helpful or relevant to school or life.
 |
| * Having large Christian studies assignments at the same as other subjects that are more important
 |
| * Having large assessment at the same time we have actual assessment for our subjects that will affect our future
 |
| * everything
 |
| * The most difficult thing about Christian Studies is being able to understand the units, in full depth.
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * Probably the assessment, I wouldn't describe Christian Studies to be terribly 'difficult' at all though.
 |
| * Find this to be a waste of time
 |
| * When having to debate arguments
 |
| * not enough days - we don't even have Christian studies lessons anymore
 |
| * assignments
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **If you could change one thing about the content or teaching in Christian Studies what would it be?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Count** |
|   | 385 |
| ***answered question*** | **385** |
| ***skipped question*** | **57** |
| * I would make it less or no homework. Being able to have freedom outside of the classroom instead of having to worry about Christian Studies as well as every other subject
 |
| * That all of it is taught. We had a teacher who was skipping certain things or only lightly touching them because she didn't think they were appropriate, which meant we missed out.
 |
| * Nothing, I really like the way my teacher teaches. Everyone else may have different experiences with different teacher
 |
| * talk more
 |
| * Christian Living in year 11 doesn’t really need any changes,
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * More deep stuff
 |
| * some teachers need to be more open to the idea that some people don’t believe in God
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Harder topics should be talked about; sexual healing, why sex is important, how Christians see the world, fake Christians etc...
 |
| * Not sure.I think it's okay
 |
| * I don't know
 |
| * more philosophical debate, less god stuff
 |
| * Make it a little more interactive and some activities maybe.
 |
| * I'm Pentecostal and sometimes the things we learn go against my beliefs. e.g. The only way to receive salvation is through baptism. I do believe baptism is important & I respect the beliefs and opinions of others – it’s just hard to try and learn about it if you don't believe it.
 |
| * Nothing. It is fine how it is.
 |
| * To discuss more modern Bible sayings so students can actually understand the language
 |
| * not sure... maybe make it more open
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Less booklets and large assignments and more sitting and discussing. I find that if everyone is involved in discussions it makes them listen and think
 |
| * More opportunity for class discussion rather than written work
 |
| * To study more religions
 |
| * More movies
 |
| * get rid of it
 |
| * less work
 |
| * that it is a free not Christian studies
 |
| * Not for it to be compulsory
 |
| * dunno
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Less structure, more fellowship
 |
| * More about one's own beliefs, and less about foreign religions. (Foreign in the sense that it is a foreign concept to the individual)
 |
| * Not having to believe in one religion
 |
| * to make it more enjoyable
 |
| * Nothing really
 |
| * make it more fun and enjoyable
 |
| * the repetitiveness of the course
 |
| * less assignments and more class discussion
 |
| * I would remove the section on suffering
 |
| * More chance to relax or catch up on other school work
 |
| * Not sure, maybe more suitable classes for personality, etc.
 |
| * more discussions
 |
| * NOTHING
 |
| * Make sure the teacher is a little more educated in the content.
 |
| * everything
 |
| * Nothing, it's a generally well ran course but sometimes I find it somewhat uninteresting
 |
| * less lessons a week
 |
| * Having nothing about religion in it
 |
| * Maybe no assignments in year 12 because it’s pretty stressful with all of the other assessment
 |
| * Have more class discussion without much written work (although in Year 12 this has happened more compared to previous years) it would create less stress on my overall work load of Year 12
 |
| * I am not sure as to what I would change
 |
| * I really didn't one specific teacher who I found to be not very in tune with the students they were teaching, as well as hypocritical when talking about 'social justice'. A lot of the students in this class were not Christian which needed to be taken into consideration when frequently expressing their personal opinions.
 |
| * make it more centered on ethics & less on Jesus.
 |
| * Drop it after year 9 or 10 because senior students need study lessons - maybe make it optional
 |
| * for it to be a study
 |
| * less content more study time
 |
| * A bit more structured
 |
| * More interactive experiences, that allow us to understand what they do from things other than long speeches
 |
| * I would like the teachers to walk through the task clearer, and maybe do some practice exercises during class about whatever the task.
 |
| * Focus more on Christianity itself and the teachings, almost like worship as opposed to other religions.
 |
| * To have Christian Studies as an OP bound subject
 |
| * Learning the stories
 |
| * I would make the assignments less time consuming.
 |
| * To make it an OP subject
 |
| * I think I would keep the content the same, but reduce the amount, so that Christian Studies can occur less frequently throughout the week.
 |
| * Make it an OP subject
 |
| * One thing that I would change about the content in Christian studies is I would allow more open discussion about spiritual issues during class time.
 |
| * More music, interactive activities and meditation
 |
| * - more music and interactive activities- meditation
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Make it more enjoyable and less time
 |
| * more teaching groups
 |
| * Stop it all together
 |
| * the fact that teachers always ask for personal opinions
 |
| * Less work more practical topics
 |
| * Have more control as a year level of the content
 |
| * I'm not sure
 |
| * I don’t know.
 |
| * To have more time listening to our teacher, instead of being required to answer
 |
| * Christian Studies doesn't phase me
 |
| * There is nothing I can think of that should change about this subject.
 |
| * Focus on more modern day things
 |
| * I want my teacher to let me talk in the conversations and I want to do more fun stuff. Make it interesting!
 |
| * make it more fun
 |
| * I would like it if we could learn about other religions as well as Christianity.
 |
| * Make it more fun and relevant
 |
| * Not force it upon us
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * Let people have different beliefs and not have double periods of CS
 |
| * make it more fun
 |
| * More videos/movies/guest speakers
 |
| * Not so much about God and Jesus and more about what the Bible actually teaches. things like how to treat people
 |
| * Choose groups If you can be trusted to choose a group you work when in.
 |
| * one period lessons every second week
 |
| * More study into other religions.
 |
| * I like everything about Christian studies, I don't think anything to do with the content or teaching should be changed
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Change of teacher
 |
| * More excursions but I like discussion groups
 |
| * Less time
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * More interactive activities
 |
| * more reflection time
 |
| * Christian studies should not be compulsory. Jesus is being constantly preached and is not fully understood. If the class was like a teenage youth group more knowledge will be retained and it would be more fun and interactive.
 |
| * nothing; it's fine as it is
 |
| * This year I think it is really good :)
 |
| * Nothing that I can think of
 |
| * more movies
 |
| * I believe Christian studies should not, as the name implies, focus on Christianity, but religions as a whole and issues.
 |
| * I believe that Christian Studies should be changed to religious studies and we should be taught about ALL religions. I don't believe a government or education system should be biased to one religion but should offer teachings and understandings of all religions. This belief of mine is caused by my upbringing, my beliefs/teachings and my religion (I am a Rastafarian).
 |
| * That it would be optional and not named "Christian Studies"
 |
| * more research based assignments
 |
| * Nothing at all.
 |
| * That we got to do it more often.
 |
| * The number of oral presentations
 |
| * There is nothing I would change about Christian studies this year
 |
| * I wouldn't change anything.
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * nothing too much maybe watch a few video clips
 |
| * The questions asked in summative assignments
 |
| * For Christian Studies to be less assignment based, and more relaxed assessment wise.
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * not waste my time
 |
| * I can only think of changing is exchanging some students out to a different class, who don't understand even when explained multiple times
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * The only thing I can think of that I'd like to change is a few of the people in my class.
 |
| * not much
 |
| * Well, I've had one teacher for the past two years who has been awesome, but the ones before that haven't been so great. They would always give us worksheets and there was limited student-teacher interaction. So more of that would be good.
 |
| * At the moment, I think that Christian Studies is fine all over
 |
| * No homework
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * The Bible
 |
| * No assignments, or more lessons
 |
| * less Bible things more ethical debates
 |
| * I would make it less history of the church and more like a youth group or look at an issue of today's society
 |
| * Get rid of it all together
 |
| * More computer usage
 |
| * More Christian focused.
 |
| * Teaching some more funny things
 |
| * I don't want to change anything.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * MORE MOVIES LESS WORK
 |
| * Less about people in the history of Christianity and more about ideas and things like that
 |
| * I would really like to be given an assignment to research my own Saint/Religious figure. I think this would be a great activity and would love for it to be in the curriculum.
 |
| * I would make it less Christian based but more spirituality and religion in general. This helps with a lot of the bias involved towards the Christian population.
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * More discussions and less task sheets
 |
| * learn more briefly and basically and only the most important parts
 |
| * Less lessons
 |
| * Having a variety of tasks rather than just watching videos and answering questions.
 |
| * More discussions of freely chosen topics.
 |
| * To be more accepting about other religions
 |
| * Focussing more on other's beliefs and thoughts might have given me a better idea on what I myself believe. The only problem with this is that I might adopt their beliefs as my own, which might lead to an inaccurate self-evaluation.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Learn different topics
 |
| * Its existence
 |
| * I do not think we should have as many Christian Studies lessons compared to other subjects.
 |
| * To make the assignments less time consuming
 |
| * Less assignments, and more learning, as this would allow more time for other subjects which count towards my OP
 |
| * That there would be no assessment but simply learning the curriculum in class time only.
 |
| * I would rather it was a spare
 |
| * no
 |
| * no
 |
| * I think what is being taught is great - more related to ethics than religion studies
 |
| * it would be to lessen the work load so we have more time for our actual important work
 |
| * To not have oral presentations
 |
| * spare instead
 |
| * Everything, would rather more time on other subjects that actually matter.
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Not to do it
 |
| * Nothing, it seems to be all right
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * extra points to OP
 |
| * No homework and only easy assignments.
 |
| * To make this subject optional
 |
| * lessen the amount of work
 |
| * World views. How can I say what my world view is when I am still forming it?
 |
| * I would alter the tasks in such a way that they are no longer extremely biased towards Christianity.
 |
| * There should be more study of other religions and the real cores of Christianity should be explored and difficult subjects of the matter explained.
 |
| * make it fun I don’t know
 |
| * to make it more engaging and stimulating
 |
| * Making it optional for students to do the subject
 |
| * Have it not be compulsory
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Not do the subject
 |
| * The choice to watch Game of Thrones
 |
| * Make it non biased towards Christianity
 |
| * make it optional
 |
| * More relevant topics
 |
| * Not make the class compulsory
 |
| * Not doing the actual subject
 |
| * More time
 |
| * It not existing
 |
| * I think that videos are an extremely effective way in conveying messages to students. When talking about a particular person and their contributions a video could be an effective tool.
 |
| * It doesn't exist
 |
| * I would change the way assessment is done
 |
| * To have less of a focus on assessment and to instead focus more on exploring the concepts in a manner that will encourage people to become involved and stimulated.
 |
| * Get rid of the classes
 |
| * I have found year twelve Christian studies this year to be a surprisingly engaging and thought provoking subject. However, my experiences this year are contrasted with my experiences in early years. I have found that rather than focusing on the message and core values of Christianity and looking at the day to day implications of a Christian approach the course work instead focused on rather boring aspects of Christianity. In year seven for instance the course work focused on approaching the Bible from an evidenced based stand point. Teachers focused on providing historical evidence to support the stories in the Bible. To 12 and 13 year olds. Not only does this fail to affect a substantial shift in their thinking about the Bible, it bores them and actually attaches negative connotations to the subject which insidiously poisons their approach to the subject in future years.
 |
| * We should do more important studies, which are closely related to us.
 |
| * Accept others of other denominations of Christian studies
 |
| * more better movies
 |
| * Questions
 |
| * Difficulty of tasks.
 |
| * Not as one sided as what it is.
 |
| * I think assessment should be carried out in class, rather than through assignments or exams, as year 12 is an important year for academics and year 12 is important but is not OP eligible.
 |
| * To include other views like Agnostic and not just Atheism
 |
| * less 'God' stuff, it should be about ethical stuff not just God
 |
| * Make it more relaxed
 |
| * Not too sure
 |
| * A more historical view of the religions.
 |
| * One thing I would change about the content or teaching in Christian Studies it would be that there were more discussions between the class about various topics to do with religion.
 |
| * less work and assessment
 |
| * That we had study time.
 |
| * Nothing much.
 |
| * Being able to look more closely at more religions, rather than zeroing in on only two religions.
 |
| * No assignments
 |
| * Maybe getting out into the world more and maybe doing community service, like talking to the homeless or something, and showing our faith and love through that
 |
| * I'd put Christians in classes together or half and half, because it's really hard to ask questions otherwise. I also think it should cover a bit more about Christianity
 |
| * I would really love to learn about Greek and Roman Mythology.
 |
| * learning more about Christianity
 |
| * Not sure.
 |
| * Writing essays
 |
| * To learn the religion interactively with a teacher and peers - not always reading from a textbook or watching a video.
 |
| * more discussion
 |
| * zu mehr interaktiven
 |
| * More incursions and excursions
 |
| * More interesting things
 |
| * More videos
 |
| * I would change the whole course. I believe that since we are going to a Lutheran school we should learn about how the Lutheran faith came about and what WE believe, not other religions. People at my school who are not Christian need to know these types of things. We need to learn more about the Bible and the place of Christians in this world
 |
| * Nothing. Just would prefer to do another subject.
 |
| * not forcing it on students but giving them the opportunity to explore and talk about the Lutheran religion and ask questions regarding their faith
 |
| * Students don't learn about religion and their beliefs behind a desk, get them out in the world that you are trying to show God created
 |
| * not to do it
 |
| * Less about actual religion and more about values and ethical issues
 |
| * Cheesecake
 |
| * Make it fun, not so repetitive
 |
| * Being able to research your own interest in theology
 |
| * make less class work
 |
| * Make the work more fun
 |
| * More about Christianity
 |
| * Don't know
 |
| * have more movies
 |
| * More fun and learning about things that we actually want to talk about. Less run by the teacher
 |
| * More time to study
 |
| * Not sure
 |
| * More relaxation, less teachings
 |
| * More meditation and study time
 |
| * more casual class discussion
 |
| * More about issues we really care about
 |
| * Less [bad/boring] movies, more free study time.
 |
| * not compulsory in year 12 as year 12 is a lot of work and anymore time you can get is a bonus
 |
| * That it does not require us to complete work outside of class time, and is more directed on beneficial learning habits, and having some relaxing time rather than having to complete power points, numerous amounts of questions.
 |
| * Less bad movies.
 |
| * Not teach the stupid subject in year 12. year 11 fine, but year 12 is important and wasting two periods a week in this stupid subject is a waste of everyone’s time
 |
| * less drug and alcohol related things
 |
| * keep same
 |
| * not sure
 |
| * More real life situations
 |
| * Not a lot
 |
| * More games. Warmer rooms.
 |
| * I think what we learn in year 12 is very helpful and useful
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * I would first off change the requirements for teaching Christian studies.To teach it you should be a regular church goer, with a minimum attendance of at least twice a month at a local Lutheran Church.
 |
| * All of it because it is wrong/ stupid/ a burden on humanity
 |
| * Make it more fun so that people do the work
 |
| * Make it more fun and appealing for those who don't believe in God.
 |
| * More discussion, less tasks.
 |
| * Explanation of Lutheran beliefs and how they differ.
 |
| * More relaxing
 |
| * No change.
 |
| * not sure
 |
| * I liked Christian studies this year and wouldn't change it
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * I like it how it currently is
 |
| * The movies.
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * not many things, I enjoy Christian studies
 |
| * Nothing of this year
 |
| * Not to watch any films.
 |
| * Dunno
 |
| * More learning games
 |
| * nothing
 |
| * Be more hands on and have more activities. Being all theory is boring and we, as students, do not pay attention and get bored easily.
 |
| * Less God and Jesus and more connecting to the real world and less aboriginal stuff I am so over it
 |
| * More reading of the Bible
 |
| * To allow the student to be more responsible for their learning
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Less Christianity stuff
 |
| * The activities. Personally I would like more activities that evolve group work or hands on activities, more exciting.
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * Have more personal experiences
 |
| * Learning about Christians would be better.
 |
| * Not studying aboriginal culture. I've studied it enough.
 |
| * More Jesus
 |
| * If you are not a Christian, then you don’t have to do the subject
 |
| * Nothing it's great already
 |
| * As prior mentioned I would change the name to religion studies. With this I believe the general feeling in the class would move from just excepting other religions as part of our world but (of course) not as legitimate as Christianity, to a feeling of acceptance that all religions deserve equal respect and Christianity isn't the only religion that is "right"
 |
| * The material
 |
| * Studying a variety of religions and not having Christianity forced upon us
 |
| * I don’t know
 |
| * I don’t know
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * I would make sure everyone was involved
 |
| * I'd alter the entirety of the subject, rather than having it focused on just the one religion of Christianity, I would have it explore unique components of all existing religions.
 |
| * To not study aboriginals, I did aboriginal spirituality for 7 years before high school.
 |
| * Make it harder and an OP subject
 |
| * I would make Christian studies optional
 |
| * Make it a more optional experience. Such as for people who don’t believe in Christ to do something else.
 |
| * The relevance to everyday life
 |
| * Focus on what religion is right for each individual student
 |
| * Make it more interesting by changing it to modern day
 |
| * That we didn't solely learn about the impact of just Christianity. I would rather have a very broad view of all/most religions.
 |
| * Make it more modern
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Not sure.
 |
| * More in depth Christian work as I feel the work has been different to previous years
 |
| * Everything, no one in the classes are will to learn and nearly all students think this class is a waste of time.
 |
| * Learn about the apocalypse
 |
| * No exams more assignments
 |
| * To do more activities as in games with the class.
 |
| * Include more discussions about everyday life, explore how Christianity has helped others in real life issues.
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * Not so boring.
 |
| * It's pretty good, it doesn't need altering
 |
| * That is isn't so theory based and that there is little assessment especially in year 12
 |
| * Nothing
 |
| * To relate more things back to the lives of the students
 |
| * More pop culture to respond to instead of old fashioned movies
 |
| * Use more enjoyable sources. Eg: Less Talking more Video's
 |
| * To make it more interesting and appealing to those who aren't Christian. Maybe change the way to teach the subject and instead of forcing the whole religion thing on the students who do not believe leading them into discovering and finding the way for their own. Encouraging to make their own decisions.
 |
| * Stay in [specific teacher] class.
 |
| * I would relate it to us as adolescents and our interest and look at texts that are relevant to us in this year 2013. For example latest movies, music and TV. releases.
 |
| * I don't know
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * I don't mind how the way it is right now
 |
| * Be broader in the focus of religions/ethics
 |
| * Wouldn’t change it
 |
| * No assignments or exams, just learning about beliefs and religions. Change the name from Christian studies to religion.
 |
| * It's fine as it is.
 |
| * The content
 |
| * Nothing much, it is already a good course in our school, it doesn't add any more pressure.
 |
| * Making it more fun and less intense
 |
| * the heaviness of some topics
 |
| * More visual learning
 |
| * Not having boring teachers, not so many worksheets
 |
| * I wouldn’t change it
 |
| * A range of teachers instead of just one. We have had the same teacher for three years now and it would be good to have some different teaching styles and opinions from the front of the classroom
 |
| * mmm
 |
| * a more similar structure from year 11 is carried on to year 12.
 |
| * I wouldn't put so much focus on other religions. Although it is interesting to learn about them, I find it would be better if we stuck to learning about Christianity.
 |
| * I would not change the content or teaching in Christian Studies rather making the work more easier/simpler to understand.
 |
| * It was pretty short.
 |
| * not do it
 |
| * learn more on the direct topic
 |
| * In grade 8 we visited different churches and a crematorium. Recently we listened to Dr. Peter Vardy speaking. All of these activities were great to learn from as I'm more of a visual learner, rather just go through notes and write things down.
 |
| * No assessment!
 |
| * Make it really, really easy to get an A+ so that we are motivated to actually work so that we can improve our GPA, or just altogether make it not affect the GPA so that we could ignore it. Or, the teacher would allow students to just ignore the class work and do our own work for other subjects that we need.
 |
| * make it more entertaining
 |
| * make it fun
 |
| * Nothing.
 |
| * I would change the teaching style to have more interaction, for example more hands on activities
 |
| * It would be nice if the learning experience was more fun. Instead of placing it on a PowerPoint and not really having any pictures as well.
 |
| * I think the classes and the teaching don’t encourage ‘non-Christians’ to contribute as much as they should. They see the subject as a waste of time and won’t apply themselves, and as a result, they won’t gain anything out of the lessons. Yes, there are exceptions and non-Christian participate occasionally, but as a general rule, it is primarily the Christian students who will participate and engage with the subject.This is a problem. CS and devotions at high-school are the only chance for some students to learn or experience the teachings of Jesus in their whole life. I feel CS should be more than a study, but a chance to be in community and establish a relationship with others in the class. Maybe the desks should be re-arranged so that the class sits in a circle?
 |
| * Less Bible reading
 |
| * Nothing much – [the teacher] makes it interesting :)
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Rate the following statements according to:** |
| **Answer Options** | **1 - Strongly disagree** | **2 - Disagree** | **3 - Uncertain** | **4 - Agree** | **5 - Strongly agree** | **Rating Average** | **Response Count** |
| Christian Studies really makes me think | 43 | 75 | 91 | 144 | 36 | 3.14 | 389 |
| Christian Studies has played a big role in my spiritual journey | 106 | 111 | 112 | 54 | 6 | 2.34 | 389 |
| Christian Studies is a bludge subject | 20 | 69 | 92 | 127 | 81 | 3.46 | 389 |
| In Christian Studies we explore topics that are of interest to me | 49 | 92 | 122 | 114 | 12 | 2.87 | 389 |
| Christian Studies does not help me make sense of the world. | 38 | 121 | 131 | 57 | 42 | 2.86 | 389 |
| Christian Studies is an important part of the curriculum at our school | 80 | 79 | 103 | 89 | 38 | 2.81 | 389 |
| Christian Studies is not relevant to me and my life | 44 | 120 | 102 | 69 | 54 | 2.92 | 389 |
| Christian Studies challenges me to think about big life questions | 50 | 68 | 97 | 137 | 37 | 3.11 | 389 |
| ***answered question*** | **389** |
| ***skipped question*** | **53** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Of all the subjects you are currently studying how would you rate Christian Studies in terms of your level of enjoyment?** |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Most enjoyable | 6.9% | 27 |
| Okay | 60.7% | 236 |
| Least enjoyable | 32.4% | 126 |
| Optional comment | 82 |
| ***answered question*** | **389** |
| ***skipped question*** | **53** |
| * it's nice to have a lesson that doesn't go towards sace
 |
| * Neutral enjoyable
 |
| * I enjoy most of the course.
 |
| * Extra unwanted pressure
 |
| * chemistry [is bad]
 |
| * Possibly third-most enjoyable, out of perhaps ten subjects
 |
| * While it is 'Okay', it’s still quite low in the list
 |
| * Not very high work load, this makes it not too bad
 |
| * middle
 |
| * It’s better than mathematics...
 |
| * it's better than metal tech
 |
| * everything else is awesome
 |
| * cause it’s a bludge
 |
| * All my other subjects are fun beyond the reaches of Christian studies.
 |
| * Worst subject
 |
| * it helps me understand my faith, but is not what I want to get into after school
 |
| * I do enjoy learning about other religions
 |
| * It was interesting and fun.
 |
| * Christian studies is a subject that is somewhat a bludge, although I do find it interesting at times.
 |
| * As compared to Math C, Physics, Chemistry and Math B
 |
| * Certain areas I feel dull and bored in a way
 |
| * It's really boring so nobody likes it. They need to make it more fun.
 |
| * Christian Studies doesn't phase me
 |
| * boring and overall not useful
 |
| * It can sometimes be challenging and confusing
 |
| * It’s good to chill out and just think about the topics
 |
| * Because it is boring
 |
| * "Religious" Studies is towards the top end of my most enjoyed subjects but not my MOST enjoyed subject. This is because of my teacher not the subject. If we looked at all religions and especially mine I would be more interested.
 |
| * "Religious" studies, not Christian.
 |
| * It's somewhere between "okay" "most enjoyable" but you didn't give me that option. I like it, but it's not my favourite.
 |
| * It’s definitely above two or three classes, so more than okay, but not the most enjoyable. Maybe have another option?
 |
| * In my course I have a lesson called theory of knowledge which is far more relevant and requires a much higher thought process than this
 |
| * Only because the teacher is good
 |
| * The teacher
 |
| * Nothing is worse than maths.
 |
| * The discussions are fun but I don't like doing the work. The work just seems to unnecessarily complicate the subject.
 |
| * Takes away from another lesson which I only have 1 module of
 |
| * It is enjoyable because it is not very strict.
 |
| * I watch movies sometimes, so that's good.
 |
| * It’s a relaxing period
 |
| * Waste of time.
 |
| * Because we have a good class
 |
| * The subject is not boring, however it is not very interesting.
 |
| * Because there are cool peeps in my class
 |
| * It is enjoyable because the class has good peers in it.
 |
| * I like the people in my class
 |
| * It alright
 |
| * bludge, so good. Don't care about it
 |
| * Boring
 |
| * The two topics of focus in year 12 have been very interesting. However, I did not find the year 11 topics as enjoyable.
 |
| * I do some really bomb subjects.
 |
| * It's wasting precious study time
 |
| * Because the other subjects I chose because I enjoyed them.
 |
| * My word this is terrible, absolutely not needed under its current teaching strategies
 |
| * Only because of the coursework. If we learnt about Christianity I would thoroughly enjoy it.
 |
| * Teacher annoys me
 |
| * Waste of time!
 |
| * It’s stupid and a waste of my time.
 |
| * Very enjoyable but not my favourite
 |
| * Time to chillax
 |
| * It is painful to hear the delusions of others
 |
| * Second to top
 |
| * Enjoyable because it’s a relaxation subject
 |
| * Most of the time I save it till last if have homework
 |
| * I do like the relaxed environment. (The only thing I like)
 |
| * It's alright I guess
 |
| * Bending towards least enjoyable. But that's mostly the teachers fault
 |
| * Only because we have an awesome teacher that tries to make it fun for us
 |
| * No hard thinking is required but participation in class is low.
 |
| * Christian Studies could never be less enjoyable than maths B.
 |
| * It is horrible.
 |
| * Biology is the worst subject, Christian studies is fine
 |
| * Relaxing
 |
| * Not the most enjoyable but pretty close to it.
 |
| * It was one of my favourite subjects last year.
 |
| * People that don't want to be there are mostly distracting and it takes away from the time
 |
| * above English
 |
| * It would be my most 2nd enjoyable subject out of 7
 |
| * It's a complete waste of time, there's so much other work that I need to be spending my time on.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Rate the relevance of the following topics on a scale of 1-5 with 1 representing high interest, and 5 representing little or no interest** |
| **Answer Options** | **1 High interest** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5 No interest** | **Rating Average** | **Response Count** |
| Who am I? – Personal identity | 59 | 93 | 125 | 49 | 63 | 3.09 | 389 |
| Science and religion – Does science make it difficult to believe in God? | 79 | 82 | 99 | 59 | 70 | 3.11 | 389 |
| Jesus – Is Jesus relevant for life today? | 34 | 58 | 107 | 79 | 111 | 2.55 | 389 |
| The Bible – What is its meaning today | 34 | 59 | 98 | 78 | 120 | 2.51 | 389 |
| Evil – Why do bad things happen? | 51 | 95 | 126 | 52 | 65 | 3.04 | 389 |
| Life – What is the meaning of life? | 76 | 109 | 104 | 39 | 61 | 3.26 | 389 |
| Ethics – Are some things always right and always wrong? Who decides? | 67 | 99 | 122 | 49 | 52 | 3.21 | 389 |
| Decision making – How do you make important life decisions? | 68 | 105 | 119 | 46 | 51 | 3.24 | 389 |
| World religions – Are they all the same? | 42 | 75 | 121 | 76 | 75 | 2.83 | 389 |
| Relationships and sexuality | 71 | 98 | 127 | 48 | 45 | 3.26 | 389 |
| Other (please specify) | 35 | 27 | 161 | 28 | 138 | 2.47 | 389 |
| ***answered question*** | **389** |
| ***skipped question*** | **53** |